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Near East & South Asia

ALGERIA

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CONTENTS

8 December 1992

POLITICAL

International Affairs

UN Representative Supports Disarmament, IAEA [EL WATAN 25 Oct]	1
Role, Influence of Maghreb Immigrants in France [Paris LE MONDE 17, 18 Nov]	1
Reciprocal EC Cooperation in Oil Industry [EL WATAN 24 Oct]	7
'Good' Prospects for EC Cooperation in Oil, Gas [LIBERTE 27 Oct]	7

Regional Affairs

Niger Closes Border Due to Security Problems [EL WATAN 22 Oct]	9
Number of Moroccan Terrorists Said Increasing [EL WATAN 5 Oct]	10

Internal Affairs

FFS Leader on Political Legitimacy, Terrorism [ALGERIE ACTUALITE 15-21 Oct]	10
Absence of FFS Secretary General Noted [EL WATAN 20 Oct]	15
Division Within FLN Party Reported [Paris LE MONDE 3 Nov]	16
FIS Arms Procurement Network Described [EL WATAN 21 Oct]	16
Repercussions of Antiterrorist Law Suggested [EL WATAN 18 Oct]	16
Antiterrorist Law: Effects 'Significant' [EL WATAN 19 Oct]	17
Success in Curbing 'Terrorism' Said Excellent [EL WATAN 24 Oct]	17
ANP Said Winning War With Terrorists [LIBERTE 22 Oct]	18
Capture of Bechar Armed Group Described [EL WATAN 14 Oct]	18

ECONOMIC

Belaïd Criticized for Vague Economic Policy [EL WATAN 7 Nov]	20
Tourism Said Up Due to New Security Measures [EL WATAN 18 Oct]	21
Economic Malaise Blamed on Past, Present Policy [Paris LE MONDE 5 Nov]	21

SOCIAL ISSUES

Report on Family Planning Center, Demographics [ALGER REPUBLICAIN 27 Oct]	24
Membership, Training at Imam Institute [Paris LE MONDE 18 Nov]	25
Number of Youth Emigrating Increasing [EL WATAN 21 Oct]	26
Citizens React to Establishment of FSS Fund [EL WATAN 23-24 Oct]	26
Citizens in 'Perpetual State of Insecurity' [LIBERTE 16 Sep]	28

International Affairs

UN Representative Supports Disarmament, IAEA

93AF0166C Algiers EL WATAN in French
25 Oct 92 p 11

[Text] Algeria favors concrete measures toward disarmament.

Taking part in the general deliberations of the United Nations First Committee on disarmament and security matters, Algeria's representative, Mr. Amine Kherbi, noted with satisfaction that progress has been made in disarmament around the world, but he expressed his "concern at the real dangers that continue to exist in the form of the nuclear threat."

Mr. Kherbi recommended that "the system of guarantees under the International Atomic Energy Agency [IAEA] be made more efficient and effective." (The presidency of the Vienna-based agency's Board of Governors passes to Algeria.) Mr. Kherbi went on to point out the close, positive relations "that Algeria has developed in recent years with the IAEA, in the application of guarantees to its two reactors for research and the production of radio-isotopes as well as in assistance and technical cooperation." He stated that "Algeria's relations with the IAEA offer an excellent illustration of my country's strong commitment to the agency's objectives and to the exclusively peaceful use of nuclear energy."

Turning to the subject of "disarmament measures that are certain to help alleviate tensions between states," Algeria's representative stated that "Algeria, because of its location at the crossroads of Africa and the Middle East, has long been committed to making these two areas safe from all weapons of mass destruction. In light of recent developments in the two regions, however, while there are signs that such a goal will be achieved in Africa, it unfortunately remains a distant prospect in the Middle East by all indications (...) and that is because of obstinate resistance on the part of Israel, the only Middle Eastern state that possesses nuclear capability and other weapons of mass destruction." (APS)

Role, Influence of Maghreb Immigrants in France

93AF0180A Paris LE MONDE in French 17, 18 Nov 92

[Article in two installments by Philippe Bernard : "France, Land of Islam"; first paragraphs in each installment are LE MONDE introductions]

[17 Nov pp 1, 12]

[Text]

1. Suburbs Under Influence

A new marginal minority of young people of Maghreb immigrant origin are brandishing the Muslim religion as a substitute for social action, which disappointed them. In a few districts where extreme social poverty and

ethnic concentration meet with political indifference, the militants of radical Islam are gaining audience.

With his ample white tunic, his maroon cap trimmed with embroidered braid, and his soft and tidy beard, Kamel Mansour does not exactly look like the organizer of a suburban sociocultural group. At the Rillieux-la-Pape ZUP [urban development zone], near Lyon, a dispirited dormitory town set on the hills overlooking the Rhone, this 27-year-old Lyonnais, the son of Algerian immigrants, is nevertheless considered as the personality most listened to by the young. "Fundamentalist?" Kamel Mansour asked the question himself, and a smile shone through his beard. "People have tried to stick all kinds of labels on me: 'Khomeynist,' then 'pro-Saddam,' and now 'pro-FIS' [Islamic Salvation Front]. What people think no longer bothers me. I am merely a Muslim working to maintain balance in this country."

The Group for Youth and Mutual Aid of which he is the president is fighting on all fronts: soccer games and Arabic lessons, school tutoring and teaching of Islam, chasing dealers and organizing meetings between young people and the police, interventions against violence, and registering young people to vote. He enjoys the full good will of the city's mayor, who put him in charge of closed down district community centers. The one that is used as the association headquarters opens on a minuscule prayer room.

Put in charge of assistance to school activities by the municipality, Kamel Mansour also manages the ZUP's three Islamic worship places and holds the position of Muslim chaplain for the Lyon jails. The ambiguity of his position does not bother him. Nor does the sponsorship of the Rillieux mayor, who lost his UDF [Union for the Defense of the Republic] label for siding with the National Front during the latest cantonal elections, or the hostility that teachers and the secular left display toward him.

"Token Arab," "ghetto leader!" He brushes aside the insults thrown at him with the serenity of the believer: "The essential is to change the district, to show that a Muslim with a beard and dressed as I am can do good," he keeps saying.

The robed "beur" [French citizen born in France of Arab immigrant parents] of the Lyon suburbs is the prototype of a new generation of militants of immigrant origin who thrive in the triple soil of the failure of the beur movement, the wearing out of integration policies, and youth unemployment. Peace in public housing projects through Islam, such is their credo.

The "turnkey" offer of Muslim social supervision cannot fail to call to mind the Islamists' strategy in the Maghreb. All the same, it may tempt French city councilors plagued by the increasingly ethnic character of conflicts. It is based on moralizing and reassuring talk spread by young people who, like Kamel Mansour, appear to be mystics rather than activists. "Like primary school

teachers of old, we tell the young about right and wrong, respect for others, tolerance, peace," he exclaimed. "We are dealing with social issues more than with religious ones. But it is because I am a Muslim that the young and their families trust me. I give them a drug against violence: good Islam. Thanks to religion, they discover the values they carry within themselves. They want to be French; we help them find their way in society by discovering their roots."

'Democracy Is Like a Souk'

This approach, explained with the zeal of the recent convert, is observed with interest by Father Christian Delorme. "The major handicap for young people of immigrant origin is that they were never confronted with a law. The father's authority never existed, and the Republic's authority seems unjust, even though it may look very beautiful on paper. Some discover that religion may give them back a structure, to cope with a reality that goes every which way," the "parish priest of Les Minguettes" who initiated the beur movement back in the early eighties and is now in charge of relations with Islam for the Lyon diocese, analyzed. These young practicing Muslims, an extremely small minority, might play an increasing part in the suburbs where tensions are getting worse, Father Delorme estimated, expressing the wish to remain in contact with them in order to prevent things from taking the wrong course.

Religion had already seized individually a few association militants confronted with political manipulations and the beurs' inability to get organized on a long-term basis. For a long time already, Toumi Djaidia, a pioneer of the 1983 "March of the Beurs" that started at Les Minguettes, has been a staunch supporter of the mosque in this public housing project where he is now selling halal meat sandwiches. For those who are religious, however, it is now time for collective moves, commitment to associations, and for taking a somewhat harder line. They are advocating veils for girls, criticizing coeducation. The most moderate and the most open, like Kamel Mansour, are cautious: "Islam teaches us to respect the laws of the country where we live, for instance the principle of the separation of church and state in France," he stated; "I am not on the side of Islam that shouts and demonstrates."

The allusion to the other rising star of Islam in Lyon is obvious. At the gates of another Lyon suburb, Villeurbanne, another association was created in 1987; it speaks a stronger language and has a promising audience. The Muslim Youth Union [UJM] distinguished itself last 1 May, when it gathered over 1,000 young people in a Venissieux gymnasium, i.e., twice as many as the very secular "Suburbs National Meeting" organized last winter by the Young Arabs of Lyon and its Suburbs (JALB) with financial help from the city ministry. On the agenda of the UJM congress: Islam as a social stabilization force in public housing projects, and the Muslims' responsibility to their "brothers" who fall into delinquency and drug abuse. The 150 or so young women who

attended, wearing headscarves, were all gathered in only one of the workshops, the one devoted to family.

'To Rule the World'

The UJM offers remedial classes, and Arabic and religion classes, but it drew some attention when it opened the "Tawhid" ("Uniqueness") bookstore in Lyon, and when it organized demonstrations—which were banned—against Salman Rushdie's book and for girls to wear the Islamic scarf at school.

The UJM's dynamism soon attracted proselytes, such as Abdelaziz Chambi, a teacher for troubled youngsters and the association vice president. The proponent of an Islam purified of all paganism—in reaction to his parents' practices, which were pervaded with superstition—Abdelaziz Chambi, 35, has been around. Brought up by illiterate immigrant parents, he looked for a path in life successively in juvenile delinquency, the French legion, Trotskyism, yoga, and the "Rosicrucian Order"... and eventually "found inner peace" in the religion of the Prophet. "I was fooling around, stealing, chasing girls, I even tried to be more French than the French," he summed up. "Today, I am a respectable citizen."

The UJM official talked frankly about politics. "Democracy is like a souk, a con game," he maintained, emphasizing the "crisis of the Western model." "We are not asking for application of the shari'ah (Islamic law, editor's note) in France," he indicated, "but we want people to stop using Muslims as scapegoats." The separation of church and state? "I respect it, because France is not a Muslim country and the people have chosen it, but it is not a divine decree, merely a human law that is not immutable."

Since the Creil headscarves case in 1989, most young people of Muslim origin perceive the separation of church and state as an imposition. Many of them even believe that the concept was invented in France to victimize Muslims....

But tolerance does not excuse the antidemocratic, anti-Christian, and anti-Jew statements that are not only made in private by some of these new French Muslims, but are now also published in French. "Islam, the Soul of Mankind," a book published by the UJM and displayed in the windows of several Paris specialized Paris bookstores, presents to its reader a simple but disturbing view of today's world.

On one side, "Judeo-Christian systems, such as colonialism, capitalism, and Zionism," in brief Western culture, whose "hypocrisy, immorality, and abject materialism" disgust Muslims, but whose "domination (...) is nearing its end." On the other side, Islam "which it is high time to restore (...) to its just and historical position, which is to rule the world." Polygamy is advocated, but also "death or flogging sentences for adultery."

In a very special chapter on Israel's history, we read that "Zionists took advantage of the rise of Nazism, which

was forcing them to leave Europe, to emigrate to Palestine." Another passage informs the reader that Jesus' divinity is one of "the Christians' inventions," a theory that is also defended in a video cassette widely distributed in France, reproducing a televised debate between a South African imam and a U.S. minister.

This wave of Muslim fundamentalism, feeding on a literal interpretation of Koranic texts, is certainly not about to engulf France. But many indications agree to confirm its incipient influence among young people of immigrant origin. For them, the awakening of Islam tolled in 1989, at the time of the Creil headscarves case. This public debate remained a sort of symbol of intolerance, awakening a feeling of cultural solidarity, even among the majority of young people who are far from practicing any kind of religion.¹

The Gulf war was the second electric shock that anchored the conviction that the Arab world is being persecuted by the West. The Intifadah, the interruption of the democratic process in Algeria and, to a lesser extent, the massacre of Bosnian Muslims, were added to the martyrology. "Where Muslims are involved, people always forget their initial good intentions. In Palestine, in the Gulf, as in Bosnia, there is always a double standard," Ahmed, a 25-year-old student who seemed out of place getting out of a Paris mosque in his modish attire, summed up. Farid, the president of a nonreligious youth organization in the Yvelines, added: "It filled me with hatred when they said that Algerians were not ready for democracy because a majority of them had voted for the FIS. And yet I would never have wanted to see an Islamic republic over there."

The short step from the discontent of ignored suburbs to the misfortunes of the Arab world is commonly crossed, and simultaneous mention is made of the benefits of a strict practice of Islam. In Epinay-sur-Seine, a Tunisian substitute teacher gives free mathematics and Arabic lessons and organizes evening lectures, especially on AIDS, during which he tells young people that good Muslims do not need condoms.

Clandestine Cassettes

In Sartrouville, in March 1991, "bearded men" were seen haranguing young people at the Indes public housing project, exhorting them to remain calm after one of them had been murdered by a superstore vigilante. After the Sartrouville events, the Association of the Indes Youth for Renewal (AJIR) was created; it provides classes in Arabic and religion. Jointly with the Arab Cultural Association of the Plateau (ACAP), it manages the public housing project's very modest place of worship, the very place where Didier-Roger Guyon used to go: a French convert to Islam, Guyon was arrested and sentenced to prison in Algeria in June 1991; according to Algerian authorities, he was driving a vehicle loaded with arms and explosives on behalf of the FIS.

The walls of the "Indes" mall, lined with definitively closed metal shutters, display a graffiti that tells it all:

"Long live the FIS. Down with the Jews." Cassettes on "massacres in Palestine" are circulated clandestinely.

To say that the Indes public housing project is an advanced stronghold of Islamism in the Paris area would be a gross distortion of the truth. But in this concentrate of social misery abandoned to its sad fate, Muslim faith looks like the last source of energy available. Secular associations such as Chabab ("Youth") and the AJS [Youth Alliance for Socialism] are on the verge of giving up, disgusted by the authorities' broken promises. "They used us to keep the youth quiet. Now that everything is quiet, they don't even answer our phone calls," an association official told us. "The only ones left in the field are volunteers, and they are Muslim militants."

Drugs, delinquency, or Islam; are these really the only possible choices in suburbs in the nineties? It is a trap. Many young French people of Maghreb origin are sociological Muslims who maintain episodic if not distant relations with religion, especially if they are of Kabyle origin. "People overestimate the role of religion among Maghreb immigrants living in France," according to Mr. Driss El Yazami, president of the commission on the "separation of church and state" at the Human Rights League, who denounced the "process of forced residence based on community and religion," which he claims is labeling and walling in the Arabs by falsely making them out to be Muslim extremists each and all.

Uncompromising Position on Chastity

At Rillieux-la-Pape, Kamel Mansour's exotic silhouette sometimes draws mockeries from the beurs. The uncompromising position on chastity of some Islam militants fresh from remote Maghreb areas is hard to take. "It's hard for us, because there are girls at school. The only means the Prophet gave us was to fast, as fasting calms desire," Kader, who studies for an electrotechnician diploma at Epinay-sur-Seine, explained.

Preaching draconian rules of behavior, dreaming of the immigrants' return to a theocratic Maghreb, the "bearded men" are clashing head-on with the dominant values of young people of immigrant origin. Educated in a secular school and nurtured on democratic references, on European and Anglo-Saxon culture, they are suddenly made to feel guilty for being "bad Muslims," a situation that they find hard to accept.

Their imperviousness is relative. Young beurs find in Islam a formidable means of self-actualization and social revenge. The unloved children of French society, they feel that they are the heirs of a brilliant civilization, and they find in religious knowledge a means of personal purification and equilibrium rather than a political weapon. It is in France that they discovered that they were Muslims, and many are learning Arabic specifically to read the Koran. Their Islam, even if it is nourished by foreign sources, is a French minority culture waiting for recognition, and most of them see the FIS as a danger rather than a hope. Yet, in the

districts where extreme social poverty and ethnic concentration meet with political indifference, no one can definitively rule out the eventuality of a race between integration and fundamentalism.

Footnotes

1. According to an IFOP [French Public Opinion Institute] survey made on behalf of LE MONDE in November 1989, 37 percent of individuals of Muslim origin residing in France said they "believed and practiced" the Muslim religion; 38 percent said they only "believed"; 20 percent said they were "of Muslim origin"; and 4 percent said they had no religion.

[18 Nov p 12]

2. FIS Scouts

We are completing today the publication of our series on Muslim revival in France. It finds its favorite ground in the suburbs (LE MONDE 17 November). For political Islam militants, continental France is a place of proselytism, a haven, and a source of financing. But their activity is hampered by their own divisions, by repression, and by the immigrants' resistance.

Friday, 1500, Paris 18. The kosher butcher in Rue Myrha is preparing for the sabbath, and "Mac Doudou," the East Indian fast-food restaurant, is closed. The drug dealers will come out later. A crowd of Muslim faithfuls is scattering in the Goutte-d'Or district. A crowd of men alone, from the Maghreb and from Africa, flowing out of the mosque. From the street, all you can usually see of this place of worship, which occupies the two stories of a former garage, is an anonymous iron curtain. On Friday, the 500 seats are not always sufficient for the crowd, and latecomers must then pray on the sidewalk. After the sermon, in the street, everyone is given a weekly photocopied sheet, LE CRITERE, published by the Algerian Brotherhood in France (FAF), an association that claims to represent the FIS in France.

The Khaled Ibn El Walid mosque in Rue Myrha is just one of the 150 Muslim places of worship scattered throughout Paris and the surrounding area; it is one of the few where the imam makes explicit reference to the repression that is falling on the "brothers" in Algeria. The Friday officiant is none other than Sheik Abdelbaki Sahraoui, 82, wearing a white beard and horn-rimmed glasses, who claims to have read the message proclaiming the creation of the FIS (dissolved last March) at the Kouba mosque, near Algiers, in March 1989. "I speak on behalf of the FIS," Sheik Sahraoui stated again today; to him, LE CRITERE is just a rag, and its editors ambitious and isolated "beggars," which until recently were also driven back from Rue Myrha. A quarrel about who is representative.¹ The cancellation of the Algerian legislative elections last January, the institution of a state of emergency, followed by the dissolution of the FIS suddenly prompted the Islamists to turn their sights toward France. By acceding to power in Algeria, they were to inherit the network of consulates and institutions that

for a long time made it possible to control immigrants to some extent. The coup also deprived them of this influence, as it raised the question of their withdrawal to Europe.

Natural Refuge

France is the most natural refuge. Already, some 30 officials and militants of the Tunisian Islamist movement al-Nahdah have obtained the status of political refugees, after staying for some time in Algeria where their status was confirmed by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees. Another 40 or so Islamists, coming directly from Tunisia, have applied for the same status, but in vain. As for those close to the FIS, they seem to have preferred applying for asylum in Great Britain, Belgium, or Germany; only five of them have filed an application in France.

But other militants may stay in France, where they have relatives, or where they are students. This is the case of Mr. Djaffar El Houari, 36, who has a Ph.D. in mathematics from Paris-VI University, is the imam of the place of worship at the Antony student residence hall, and was about to be elected FIS deputy in Boufarik (he had a good chance to win on the second ballot) when the Algerian legislative elections were canceled.

Living "astride" the two countries, Mr. El Houari created the FAF in December 1990 and has been its president since then; the FAF spokesman, Mr. Moussa Kraouche, a computer science student at Paris-II, is data-processing project leader at the Argenteuil city hall. Since the aborted elections, the association, created to serve as an electoral relay for Algerians living in France, has engaged in a virulent denunciation of repression in Algeria.

The electoral meeting that gathered some 300 people in Paris before the Algerian election of December 1991 has been followed since January by public meetings in Antony, Dijon, and Roubaix, where veiled threats against France, and a parallel between Kabul and Algiers led to protests among the immigrants themselves. The Sahara "security centers" where Islamists have been regrouped, and "the atrocities of repression in Algeria" are systematically mentioned and illustrated by means of photographs that are often unbearable. Three applications to demonstrate in front of the Algerian embassy in Paris were met with a ban from the Paris police authorities.

The Brotherhood thus tries to promote solidarity with "imprisoned and ill-treated" Islamists, "in compliance with French law," Mr. Kraouche indicated, regretting that immigrants are "not well-organized enough and not mature enough to do something concrete." The Brotherhood also tries to capitalize on the disarray of the Algerian community in France which, although far from fully supporting the FIS, resents the interruption of the democratic process and suffers to see the country fall into chaos. "Help your Algerian brothers and sisters get

their rights! God will help you on doomsday," LE CRITERE—thus called because it "separates Right from Wrong"—proclaims.

Algeria in Civil War

Week after week, LE CRITERE publishes, in its own way, a chronicle of Algeria in civil war, splashing news faxed from Algeria across its "military operations" column: news of policemen "involved in torture" being executed "by the mujahedins," of attacks against gendarmerie stations, of denunciations, and the triumphant news of military personnel deserting to join "the armed struggle."

An editorial calls to resistance against "the secular-communist junta" in power; another criticizes France's aid "to dictatorship," and wonders: "Will any immigrant believe that France is a State that defends human rights?" The bulletin also does not hesitate to support a very basic interpretation of religion. For instance, last May, it published a report that the name of Allah had appeared in the sky, above the Reggane camp where Islamist militants are imprisoned. LE CRITERE accused skeptical readers, who mentioned that a laser could have been used, of doubting the sacred nature of the FIS struggle.

Although the Algerian Brotherhood is just a tiny group whose representativeness has been questioned, it has found a relay in large French Muslim associations such as the National Federation of Muslims in France and the Union of Islamic Organizations in France, which have echoed the cause of Algerian Islamists at large public meetings. The dissemination of the FAF Friday bulletin, which the promoters claim has a circulation of "20,000 to 30,000 copies," seems to be steadily increasing in mosques and places of worship. Obviously absent from the Great Mosque of Paris, which is controlled by the Algerian government, LE CRITERE is distributed from Marseille to Roubaix, in many minuscule places of worship scattered in public housing projects.

At the Chemin-de-l'Ile housing project, at the edge of an industrial zone on the periphery of Nanterre (Hauts-de-Seine), there is no minaret and no muezzin. Shabby premises at the end of a mysterious corridor containing an upside-down garbage can and an empty TV set house a small prayer room, which doubles as Koranic school. Some 20 faithfuls, most of them young, leave after the sermon, LE CRITERE in hand. "Someone put it on our shoes while we were praying," one of the boys said. Algeria? "It's like Lebanon for the Christians. We have relatives over there and we feel solidarity with them. Those who protest because democracy was violated are put into camps. Your newspapers don't talk about it, that is why we don't believe them," the imam called out with a strong accent. "And here, we are doing what is right; we are major opponents of the drug market."

For their field work, Islamists prefer frustrated suburbs, although they have not gained any marked influence there so far. They focus by priority on associations

recognized by the authorities, whose object may be to fight drug dealers, to manage a place of worship, to organize remedial classes for young people, or a sports activity, as was the case of the Suresnes Association of Martial Arts, whose officials have had contacts with the brotherhood.

The premises loaned by the Suresnes (Hauts-de-Seine) municipality to this youth group were closed last May, when the group's Thai boxing instructor was charged with assault and battery; he is alleged to have wounded drug dealers operating in Nanterre with a knife. Was it a case of dealer harassment or a settling of scores among dealers? Was it the isolated act of a fanatic? Investigators remain perplexed. A few months earlier, while investigating a similar case that had occurred not far from the Chemin-de-l'Ile prayer room, the police had found hunting firearms, a copy of *Mein Kampf*, and Nazi insignias at the domicile of that same instructor.

A Place of Worship in a Prefabricated Building

Although encounters of this type between Islamist militants and shady individuals are now possible, it seems that FIS representatives prefer investing their efforts in sounder contacts. At Epinay-sur-Seine (Seine-Saint-Denis), a former FAF bureau member joined the Cultural and Islamic Association (ACI) which its president, with close ties to the socialist municipal council, just renamed Epinay Muslim Integration. His presence was an embarrassment for an association which, like many others, intends to make reference to Muslim culture without for all that lapsing into religious fundamentalism.

But the lack of transparency in appointing imams, and the fact that most elected officials are unable to grasp the intricacies of Muslim trends, led to a particularly inextricable situation in Epinay. After obtaining the removal of an imam close to the Islamist movement, whom some faithfuls accused of misappropriating funds, the municipality made a prayer room available to two associations—one secular, the other Muslim—which were soon in violent conflict. As a result, the place of worship installed in a blue sheetiron prefabricated building was abandoned and became the favorite haunt of a few Islamists, Algerians as well as Tunisians.

France, as a place for political and religious propaganda among people of immigrant origin, nevertheless has its limitations. The network of places of worship controlled by the Paris mosque has remained impervious so far. Of the 250 Algerian imams practicing in France, a half dozen are considered suspect. For young people of the second, or even the third generation, Algeria is now just a place where they go for the holidays and to meet their relatives; its political convulsions trigger emotion, concern, but also weariness. "The fate of Algerians in France does not depend on the situation in Algeria," the Muslim writer and academic Sadek Sellam wrote. "They have an objective view and wish first of all a return to civil peace, democracy, and economic development."

'Fatima, Interdiction To Step Out'

Some beurs have renamed the FIS "Fatima, Interdiction To Step out!" The FAF, whose initials also draw the irony of the most highly politicized beurs, is not gaining much ground among the immigrant generation still influenced by the FLN [National Liberation Front] and used to discretion, nor among the young who are French citizens and whose way of life and cultural and political references are miles away from religious fundamentalism. As a result, the FIS implantation in France looks more like an informal nebula in the making, organized by a few scouts—imams and students—who sometimes work as substitute teachers and around whom a few association supporters gravitate, than like a genuine organized network. Obviously, if the Islamists were to come to power in Algiers, the situation would change drastically, as the FIS would gain control over State influence networks.

For the time being, the FAF's claims that "Islam is incompatible with the separation of church and state" and that "most Algerians will go home if a stable Islamic State is set up" are in stark contradiction with the fact that [immigrants and their children] have put down strong roots in France; moreover it is reminiscent of Le Pen's rhetoric. "The FIS is perceived as an anti-immigrant movement," Mr. Olivier Roy, a CNRS [National Center for Scientific Research] researcher, commented.² "It denounces their dual culture by explaining that a good Muslim cannot live under a non-Muslim jurisdiction. It leaves the choice between going back, or creating in France ghettos controlled by mullahs."

Hoped-for sanctuary, unavoidable withdrawal base, a place for uncertain proselytism, the French territory has recently become a place for internal political strife and for fund raising. These ultimate attractions seem to account for Mr. Kamreddine Kerbane's repeated visits to France: a former member of the Majlis-el-Choura, the FIS collegial directorate, whose specialty used to be the recruiting of young Algerian volunteers to fight the Red Army in Afghanistan, he is now said to be in charge of supplying men and equipment from abroad to the Algerian maquis, by retraining Islamist militants to do business.

Counterfeit Lacoste Shirts

Arriving in France with a friend last January, under a visa issued in Islamabad, Mr. Kerbane was escorted back to the border last summer, for threatening law and order (LE MONDE, 20 August), after the press disclosed his presence. According to reports that are in agreement, Mr. Kerbane, who has paid another visit to France since then, is attempting to gain control over the Algerian Brotherhood, whose line he finds too soft. A close associate of Imam Sahraoui of Rue Myrha, he is attempting, according to the police, to organize the collection of funds from companies set up in France. In addition to trafficking in cars and spare parts, and to con

games involving trips to Mecca, he is also said to be dealing in medical drugs for the maquis.

The counterfeit Lacoste shirts that groups of young Algerian "trabendists" (dealers in smuggled goods) are offering to passers-by at the Marseille flea market or in the Barbes district in Paris, also seem to provide funds for the FIS coffers. Some of these shirts were stocked at the mosque of Rue Polonceau, near the Goutte-d'Or. These suspicions were further confirmed on Wednesday 14 October, when the police discovered lots of counterfeit Lacoste shirts at the headquarters of the Paris company France Export Equipment, the manager of which is one of Kamreddine Kerbane's acquaintances. The Algerian "party of God" is not looking just for spiritual nourishment in France.

[Box, p 12]

Didier Guyon, Mujahedin of the Northwest Suburbs

Is Didier-Roger Guyon, also known as Abdelkrim, a visionary who went to offer his services to the FIS, or is he the man to whom the Islamist party entrusted the recruiting in France of volunteers for its maquis? At any rate, the epic of this 43-year-old French convert to Islam stopped short. After leaving the Indes housing project in Sartrouville (Yvelines) by car on 3 June 1991, he was arrested 10 days later in Algeria while driving a vehicle loaded with arms and explosives.

Imprisoned, with four other inhabitants of Sartrouville who went with him, he has been detained in Tiaret since then, waiting to be tried. He is said to have confessed "under torture" that he had met FIS leaders who allegedly entrusted him with a recruiting mission in France.

The path followed by this child of the suburbs who got involved with radical Islam started in France with a long stay in jail as a juvenile delinquent. After his release, he travelled in Morocco and in Mali, discovered Islam and became a Muslim, "more of a Muslim than I am," his wife, of Algerian origin, recalled. Later on, when the Gulf war broke out, he rushed to Algeria, asking to enroll on the side of Iraq. He was rejected. The FIS refused to enroll him but, it seems, entrusted him with the recruiting, in France, of young Algerians willing to help the party. A few weeks later he was trapped.

When his arrest was announced, in June 1991, the Indes housing project, where violence had erupted three months earlier, was again in a turmoil. The staircase leading to the apartment where Didier Guyon's wife and their two children live is covered with pro-FIS graffiti. "People stopped talking to me," Mrs. Fatiha Guyon recalled; "they said that my husband was not a genuine Muslim and called him a CIA spy." She believes that her husband was manipulated. Was he betrayed by his friends to show publicly how popular the FIS is, even with a French Muslim? Or was he perhaps considered as a visionary, bothersome rather than useful? Mrs. Guyon, who has been visiting her husband, said that he was completely alone. "They let him down," she exclaimed.

Footnotes

1. The rivalry between the two FIS trends was transposed to France, among the Algerian Islamists who went into exile when the party was dissolved. To the "djeza'arist" trend, regrouping young academics open to the world and whose objective is to achieve revolution in Algeria with the Algerians themselves, is opposed the "salafist" trend headed by people with a more traditional education, in particular obscurantist imams whose only points of reference are the Koran and the sunna (tradition).

2. Mr. Olivier Roy is the author of *L'Echec de l'Islam Politique (The Failure of Political Islam)*, published by Le Seuil in October 1992.

Reciprocal EC Cooperation in Oil Industry

93AF0166B Algiers EL WATAN in French
24 Oct 92 p 3

[Text] Europe's energy commissioner, Mr. Antonio Cardoso E. Cunha, has told APS that Europe is "ready to help Algeria develop its oil industry" provided that Algerian law governing that area is refined and better understood by her potential partners.

Mr. Cunha described his visit to Algeria, which began on Thursday, as an "informal one" aimed at gaining a better understanding of what the Algerian Government expects from the European Community and at reaching agreement on "what Europe can do to become part of the current government's program of activities."

Mr. Cunha sees his visit as a "sign" of Europe's willingness to work with Algeria.

In the course of his visit, the European Commissioner has met with several Algerian officials—the ministers of energy and industry, in particular.

In an interview with the London-based EL HAYET on the eve of his visit to Algiers, Mr. Cunha described Algeria as an "essential partner for the European market in view of its economic interest and geographic proximity." He also noted that the interests of Europe and Algeria are "closely convergent."

The EEC, he said, has "welcomed Algeria's willingness to open some of its wells to oil companies with a view to increasing its exports and developing its resources."

He went on to state that Algeria's law relative to the oil and gas sector "is very much in line with the objectives of Europe's energy policy" in that it expands the areas open to foreign involvement to include oil and gas fields already under production.

'Good' Prospects for EC Cooperation in Oil, Gas

93AF0182C Algiers LIBERTE in French
27 Oct 92 pp 1, 9

[Article with an introduction signed C.O.: "Energy Policy: Full Throttle"—first paragraph is LIBERTE introduction]

[Text] The conjunction of the national energy policy, European demand, and ecological considerations is about to open foreign markets wider to Algerian gas.

Introduction

The new law on energy that calls on foreign companies to operate the Hassi Messaoud oil wells was favorably received by Mr. Cordoso Er-Cunha, the European energy commissioner who, on the eve of his visit to Algeria, stated that "this law is consistent with the objectives of European policy." Mr. Cunha, who will meet with Algerian officials to discuss the country's economic situation, is considering a joint study of the prospects for cooperation between Algeria and the European Economic Community.

As evidence of this desire for cooperation, the European energy commissioner intends to extend the talks to include small and medium-size companies. According to our country's guest, Algeria, which "is going through a very interesting stage," is an essential partner for the European market as far as natural gas imports are concerned, due to economic interest and geographic proximity." [quotation marks as published]

Algeria, therefore, should seize the opportunity offered by the future increase of its exports, which would result in increased investments in infrastructures.

Recalling that "Europe's and Algeria's interests are closely linked," and insisting on the fact that "the development of this vital sector requires identical efforts from both parties," thus calling for a veritable "symbiosis" between the partners, i.e., Algeria and the Twelve [EC countries], the Community spokesman certainly took into consideration the situations induced by new political, economic, and social deals in a world that keeps changing.

The former USSR, worried by domestic policy problems and whose economy is in bad shape is no longer in a position to meet its European clients' full demand for oil and gas.

But the Twelve also have ecological concerns, which makes them increasingly intolerant of nuclear power plants on EC territory. The Chernobyl disaster made environmentalists aware of the dangers there is in choosing nuclear power.

In this respect, Sweden's example is significant of the European trend toward replacing nuclear power with oil and gas. As the cost of shipping oil and gas by sea keeps rising, Algeria seems to be viewed in a new light; the

European community praised its efforts "to double the volume of its gas exports to Italy via Tunisia, and the major project aimed at forwarding Algerian gas exports to Spain via the Moroccan territory, a project whose significance goes beyond economic interests."

Mr. Serge Tchuruk, CEO of the Total oil group, showed similar renewed interest; following a recent audience with the prime minister, he let it be known that he, too, was interested "in participating more actively in the Algerian oil and gas sector development program."

The CEO of the American oil group "Halliburton," Mr. Thomas Cruikshank, who recently signed a cooperation agreement with Sonatrach [National Company for the Transport and Marketing of Hydrocarbons], also met with the prime minister. This promises improved prospects of recovery for the country's economy, which is based mostly on oil and gas development and export.

Good Prospects

The European Community is willing to help Algeria relaunch its production apparatus, for oil and gas as well as for small and medium-size companies, or any other cooperation field to be defined jointly, the European energy commissioner, Mr. Cunha, indicated at the end of his visit to Algiers.

Throughout the interview he granted to the APS Mr. Cunha stressed the importance of Algerian oil and gas for Europe; he estimated that relations between the two parties and the level of current contacts "augur good prospects."

"I believe," he said, "that it is possible to achieve considerable development of both Algerian-EC overall cooperation, and Algeria's oil and gas production potential, to benefit Algerian economy without imposing an excessive financial burden on Algeria, considering that such a burden may be shared between producers and consumers." He added that he had noted "with great interest" the Algerian Government's recent statements concerning the possibilities and guarantees offered to foreign capital investment. Using the Maghreb-Europe gas pipeline to illustrate his statement, Mr. Cunha stated that financing for the project was "practically finalized" at European Investment Bank (EIB) level, while a consortium of French and British companies is working on the pipeline route across the Strait of Gibraltar. After recalling that Europe's energy requirements and facilities increase the share of gas every day, he again stated that "for the Europeans," Algeria "is the most important and the nearest of its suppliers of oil, and especially of gas."

"For us, European gas consumers, the Maghreb-Europe gas pipeline is of huge significance, and its completion is extremely urgent," he added.

The Need for Small and Medium-Size Companies

Asked about the subject of his discussions with Algerian officials, in particular with the ministers of energy and

industry, Mr. Cunha indicated that "his and the EEC's concern was to know to what extent Algerian capacities take into account the impact of oil and gas industry development on the remaining economic sectors."

During his visit to Algiers, Mr. Cunha also explained the European views concerning the need for the development in Algeria of a network of small and medium-size companies independent from the major oil and gas industry.

"To the extent that this other scheme (small and medium-size companies) interests the Algerians and to the extent that they show interest for it, we are prepared to look with them for lines of cooperation, to share in the development of the Algerian production plant," he stated, estimating that "this subsector represents a significant factor of social stability," as Europe "needs to establish durable and peaceful relations" both with Algeria and with the Maghreb as a whole.

Cooperation on Energy Destined To Develop

Answering a question on Algerian-EEC cooperation on energy, the European commissioner indicated that, while it is undeniably destined to develop in the near future, for the time being it is limited to Algerian oil and gas sale-purchase operations, and to the preparation of joint agreements and projects "many of which never go beyond intentions," to projects concerning energy savings and new and renewable forms of energy, and to the financing of part of the Maghreb-Europe gas pipeline.

Concerning his conversations with Mr. Hacene Mefti, the energy minister, the European official indicated that they had also focused on prospects for production development, which is now made possible by the 1991 amendments to the Algerian law on oil and gas of 1986, on the overhauling of the liquefaction capacity, and on the reinforcement of the country's transportation potential, both by land and by sea. The European Community, which is a very sophisticated economic entity, needs to establish stable and steady relations with countries possessing energy resources, and Algeria "stands out in the first ranks of these countries," Mr. Cunha insisted, noting in this respect that Algerian-EEC relations "can only keep developing at a time when European and Maghreb countries must expand their relations, because the need for mutual aid is obvious on both sides."

EEC Interested in the Growth of Southern Mediterranean Countries

Concerning the environmental-protection carbon tax that Europe is attempting to impose on oil and gas imports, obviously to the detriment of exporting countries, he acknowledged that, scientifically, there is no proof that liquid hydrocarbons alone are responsible for the presence of large amounts of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. Nevertheless, Mr. Cunha maintained that this problem "has a decisive influence on the oil market," and that producers cannot ignore it because, he

said, there is not a production problem and a consumption problem; rather both parties' interests are intimately linked and it is increasingly urgent for both parties to cooperate. Answering a question on the future of relations between the Twelve and Southern Mediterranean countries, Mr. Cunha answered: "The only answer I can give people around the Mediterranean is that the Community cannot be conceived as an island of prosperity surrounded by disaster areas. We are extremely interested in having our growth accompanied by our neighbors' growth, for purely selfish reasons, because it is actually a matter of self-protection for us."

Regional Affairs

Niger Closes Border Due to Security Problems

93AF0170C Algiers EL WATAN in French
22 Oct 92 p 19

[Interview with El-Hadj Issa Ben Djimat, the Nigerien consul in Tamanrasset, by H. Bouchaib; place and date not given: "A Plot Against North Africa"; first two paragraphs are EL WATAN introduction]

[Text] *The borders between Algeria and Niger, which were closed in the early part of this year (February) for security reasons, were reopened on 1 June 1992. But, still for the same reasons, we have learned that the Nigerien Government has again decided to close its "Assamaka" border post located opposite the Algerian border post of Ain Guezam.*

Following is a conversation with Mr. El-Hadj Issa Ben Djimat, the Nigerien consul in Tamanrasset, who was kind enough to talk with us about the various problems connected with the Tuareg and the borders.

[Bouchaib] The government of Niger has just closed the major border crossing with Algeria. Why?

[Issa Ben Djimat] For reasons of security for goods and persons, the Nigerien Government has closed its northern border with Algeria (Assamaka). I must state that this was done for obvious security reasons, since at the moment armed bandits are roaming all around the northern borders of Niger and Mali and are attacking all travelers, tourists or carriers.

Assamaka and Niger are clearly not closed to Algerian nationals. This measure is only aimed at European tourists traveling through Algeria in order to get to Niger. These tourists are real prey for the rebels, who stop at nothing to attack them. So this border is temporarily closed to fight the banditry and the rebellion until such time as this calms down and matters return to normal.

[Bouchaib] Has the border been unilaterally closed?

[Issa Ben Djimat] Yes! And I would say very temporarily, for obvious security reasons, for the security of both Nigerien citizens and others, since at the moment

there is a very large movement of people on both sides of the border which is hard to control.

The Nigerien Government is aware of the seriousness of this decision but could make no other choice to ensure the safety of goods and persons. But I would repeat that Niger is not closed to Algerians; we are continuing to issue them visas on a daily basis.

[Bouchaib] Just a moment ago you referred to "armed bandits." Exactly who are they?

[Issa Ben Djimat] I cannot tell you their nationality. At the moment the northern part of the Sahara: Chad, the Sudan, and Somalia, and extending through Algeria, Niger, Mali, Libya, and Mauritania, has been invaded by a type of international banditry, which is in the process of organizing itself and is growing larger. We are under the impression that there has been some interaction between these different bandits, who have organized themselves better so as to attack better. This phenomenon is assuming proportions that are too great. In this very specific instance, I would talk in terms of banditry rather than mere rebellion, hence the seriousness.

[Bouchaib] What are the connections and where did they originate?

[Issa Ben Djimat] The first connection probably originated in Chad immediately after the end of the war and after President Hissen Habre's escape. A huge quantity of arms passed through the northern part of the Sahara and was resold to rebels by former members of the Chadian opposition. The second connection originated within the Popular Front for the Liberation of Saguia el Hamra and Rio de Oro [Polisario]. It went from Mauritania and Mali, then went back to Niger and southern Algeria. The third connection is also the Chadian connection. It crossed the south of Niger and went towards Algeria. So there truly is international banditry, which attacks goods and persons and extends from the Sudan to Mauritania.

In particular these armed bandits are attracted by all-terrain vehicles (the 4x4s). These allow them to be mobile, since they are the quickest way to communicate and move about in the Sahara.

[Bouchaib] What about the "Tuareg problem," as certain media have termed it?

[Issa Ben Djimat] A Tuareg problem? One only exists in the imaginations of certain people! And in this regard, I am thinking of the French media, which never stop making up stories and aggravating the situation. Morning and evening they gorge themselves in their wish to let the whole world know that they are more humane than anyone else. They ought to deal with their own problems and establish order in their own house, in Corsica, for example, and elsewhere, rather than always bring up the Tuareg. The chiefs who meet often to discuss them and come up with the solution have indeed stated the opposite.

To be sure, there is the problem of certain individuals; the problem that concerns the Tuareg in particular is nothing but a malicious invention to sow discord and disorder. These border areas are also inhabited by Arabs, Beri-Beris, and others, not just by Tuaregs, and it is in that very context that the European media are making their mistake.

The problem tied to these groups within the population is a development problem and it is a general one. There are certain individuals who have refused to integrate and take part in any development, whatever it may be....

In any event, I notice that the Tuareg in Niger are better assimilated than other Tuareg.

[Bouchaib] You say they have refused to integrate; why?

[Issa Ben Djimat] Quite simply because they signed up—or rather, they were signed up—in an Islamic legion that took advantage of a population movement to better propagate itself.

In any event, there are many more Nigerien Tuareg in southern Algeria than in Libya. No shot has ever been fired on the Algerian side, never! So?

Libya has used these Nigerien, Malian, and other Tuareg and established an Islamic legion the better to sign them up. They have been given military training and are now unemployed again.

Has Libya had to discuss this at the international level?

The African press should have an offensive role because there is a sort of disinformation organized by the European media. They truly want to set the peoples of Mali, Niger, Algeria, and Libya on fire. It is a real plot that consists of destabilizing African states.

[Bouchaib] Some Algerian Tuareg deplore the fact that other Malian or Nigerien Tuareg carry identity papers or birth certificates issued by certain local authorities though they were not even born in Algeria. What do you think of this?

[Issa Ben Djimat] This problem is not peculiar to Algeria; it is linked to the tradition of the nomads who, in any event, are at home where they live. They come from neither Mali, Niger, nor Algeria; they are Saharans....

Number of Moroccan Terrorists Said Increasing

93AF0123C Algiers EL WATAN in French 5 Oct 92 p 1

[Commentary by Tayeb Belghiche: "Terrorism, Moroccan Style"]

[Text] Moroccan terrorists seem to have found a favorite hunting ground in Algeria. With the arrest of one of them in Maghnia, it will be noted that this is not the first time that Moroccans have been implicated in criminal acts in Algeria.

A Moroccan citizen set a bomb in a cafe in that same city [Maghnia] in 1989. In the ensuing explosion one Algerian was killed and three others were wounded. The terrorist himself was wounded during the attack, which no doubt made his arrest possible.

About three months ago two Moroccans were arrested in the forest of M'Sila, near Oran. They were in possession of TNT and various kinds of weapons.

Finally, at the beginning of September a Moroccan who was actively being sought by the police was arrested when he was participating in an attack against Meftah Cemetery. He had his brother with him who, reportedly, is still in hiding.

This growing number of Moroccan criminals in Algeria is disturbing. It is known that Muslim fundamentalists in Morocco are unable to operate in their own country. They live in what is truly a police state where, in the words of a Swiss newspaper, agents of the Securitate [Romanian security service under Ceausescu] would have been like choir boys, alongside the agents of the Moroccan DST [Defense and Surveillance of the National Territory, a security organization].

Why have they been redeployed to Algeria? Under the cover of Islamism, could these terrorists be working for other services, which would be happy to see Algeria totally destabilized and plunged into chaos?

It is strange that TNT is only to be found in the western part of the country. The TNT that was used to make the airport bomb was delivered in Tlaret, according to the confessions of members of the former FIS who were implicated in the crime.

There are too many disturbing facts that lead one to think that Algeria is not just a testing ground for the Islamist International.

Internal Affairs

FFS Leader on Political Legitimacy, Terrorism

93AF0151A Algiers ALGERIE ACTUALITE in French 15-21 Oct 92 pp 14-15

[Interview with M. Bouhadeb, assistant secretary general of the Front of Socialist Forces (FFS), by Ali Brahimi; place and date not given]

[Text] Neither a police state nor a fundamentalist state is acceptable, says the FFS [Front of Socialist Forces], unchanged in its views. The party's ideal is to achieve development with a legitimate government at the helm. But legitimacy means elections, and voters have chosen the FIS [Islamic Salvation Front] in the past two elections, have they not? The FFS has a solution for that, too: a neutral government to oversee the transition. But, do nonpartisan politicians actually exist? According to Mr. Bouhadeb who is temporarily replacing Hocine Ait Ahmed as FFS leader, enough of them could be found to

fill 40 cabinets! Meanwhile, the citizens would have to be taught that thoughts of lynching or burning a man alive are wrong, not matter how atrocious the crime he committed.

[ALGERIE ACTUALITE] What do you perceive to be the real causes of terrorism in Algeria?

[Bouhade] I believe you have to go back to the problem of political stalemate and its impact on Algerian society in order to understand the terrorism we are experiencing. This terrorism is the expression of an extremism that had other origins. It is the most reprehensible manifestation of various kinds of extremism.

[ALGERIE ACTUALITE] Whose extremism?

[Bouhade] The extremism of those who are resorting to terrorism. There are those who resort to terrorism and those who exploit it. Certain groups exploited and caused this terrorism. The country had a glimpse of them very recently in connection with the airport bombing. We have always condemned terrorism and will always do so in no uncertain terms. Judging from media reports, it seems that these groups have been positively identified. The various kinds of extremism that I mentioned were created by the system. The education system, which failed to do its job, was one factor in the rise of extremist views. The second, and we must not forget it, was the absence of a legitimate government. Algerians were never given the right to choose their representatives. As long as oil revenues were flowing into the country, Algerians could be kept from demanding democratic reforms. As soon as the situation changed, however, those demands resurfaced, steadily building to October 1988. All these frustrations, in combination with a favorable terrain, have brought terrorism to Algeria, unfortunately.

[ALGERIE ACTUALITE] What do you think of the new antiterrorism law?

[Bouhade] This law limits the fundamental freedoms of the citizen. The FFS' position on emergency governing powers has always been clear. We oppose such restrictions on individual and collective freedoms. The antiterrorism law gives the government too much leeway. Any threat to the stability or proper functioning of state institutions is punishable under this law, but who defines stability? Who defines the proper functioning of state institutions? Could it be interpreted to mean that no one should arrive late to work? The law is too restrictive, particularly when you look at countries like Italy, Great Britain, and Germany which, in their fight against this deplorable phenomenon, were able to draft antiterrorism laws that do not extinguish individual and collective freedoms....

[ALGERIE ACTUALITE] But those countries have a tradition of pluralism, whereas we are still in the learning stages....

[Bouhade] That was the reasoning used to deprive the Algerian people of their right to democracy back in 1962. Algerians did not choose the regime that came to power in 1962. They did not choose one-party rule. That same reasoning was applied to the Third World as a whole, by the way. The thinking was that Algerians were incapable of democracy and that democracy should remain a future goal. 30 years later, the results are there for all to see. I believe that we must avoid making the same mistakes again. Democracy should not be viewed as a future goal, but as a means of solving the current crisis in Algeria. It is true that democracy has a long history in the countries you mentioned, but that is no reason to delay democracy in Algeria any longer.

[ALGERIE ACTUALITE] But the machinery in those countries is well-oiled....

[Bouhade] Italy has antiterrorist laws. I am merely stating that those laws are less injurious to individual and collective freedoms.

[ALGERIE ACTUALITE] Therefore you believe that what is happening in Algeria does not warrant such a law.

[Bouhade] That is not exactly what I said. We have always condemned terrorism and will continue to do so. The full force of the law must be brought to bear against terrorists, but in a dispassionate way. We condemn terrorism regardless of its origins or perpetrators. That being the case, we believe that the laws of the Algerian republic must be respected. On those same grounds, I deplore the laxism of the past that allowed terrorism to come into existence and spread. When republican principles were abandoned in the APCs [People's Communal Assemblies], the government did not react as it did when cultural centers were attacked.

[ALGERIE ACTUALITE] How does it feel to realize that you engaged in dialogue with terrorists following the first round of the legislative elections?

[Bouhade] We were in contact with the FLN [National Liberation Front] and, on the same day, with the leaders of the FIS. If, tomorrow, I were to catch you talking to a member of the ex-FIS, would I have the right to jump to the conclusion that you had signed an agreement with him or entered into a dialogue? Contacts took place and views were exchanged. Nothing more than that. And the purpose of our secretary general's action was to keep the situation from exploding. On the Friday that followed that meeting, the risk of an explosion was present. In short, there never was an agreement or dialogue with the FIS, and had there been one, it would have been made public.

[ALGERIE ACTUALITE] You are accused of doing everything possible to proceed with the second round of voting, with the ulterior motive of secession.

[Bouhadef] I think the charge of secession should be discussed in a clear and responsible manner. It is true that the central region is controlled by the FFS.

[ALGERIE ACTUALITE] What do you mean by the central region?

[Bouhadef] The center of the country, the wilayat of the center as they are known and defined—where we had a particularly strong showing in the legislative elections. That being the case, every effort was made to label the FFS as a regional party. If you remember, in the deliberations over a new electoral law, the FFS called for a system of proportional voting by wilayah, rather than the single-district system chosen by the Ghazali government for the legislative elections. I will not go into the problem of electoral districting. If the FFS proposal had been adopted, we would not have been in the situation we were in following the first round of the legislative elections. In a proportional vote by wilayah, a party with only 30 percent of the votes could not take more than 40 seats in the assembly. The system that was used, by contrast, enabled 30 percent of the electorate to sweep up two-thirds of the seats. Every effort was made to "ghettoize" the FFS, to limit it to the central region. But we are a national party. By our calculations, if the proportional system had been used, we would have had the same number of seats, but they would have been spread out over a national base. As for our control over the central region, why is that same charge not made against Felipe Gonzales who is the undisputed master of Andalusia? And what about the prominent political leaders of the European countries? They are not labeled as regionalists for having a support base in a given region. Only in Algeria are charges of secession systematically made.

[ALGERIE ACTUALITE] You refuse the label of a regional party, but the majority of FFS voters are in Kabylia....

[Bouhadef] Because every effort was made to "ghettoize" our party. Only the rallies held in the central region by our secretary general were covered by the media. His rallies in Annaba, Oran, and elsewhere received no television coverage, for example.

[ALGERIE ACTUALITE] Who was behind this effort to "ghettoize" the FFS?

[Bouhadef] The government! Who controls the media? Who uses the media?

[ALGERIE ACTUALITE] And what would have been the government's motive?

[Bouhadef] Precisely to portray the FFS as a regional party, as a secessionist party, and who knows what else!

[ALGERIE ACTUALITE] What is the view of the FFS of that story of an alliance of the three fronts (FFS, FLN, FIS) involving France?

[Bouhadef] I do not see any reason to rehash the subject. I told you that the only meeting, the only formal contact, that we had with the FLN was made public, just as the only contact we had with the FIS was made public. We had no further contact with these parties, but that was nonetheless construed as the start of an three-way alliance. Those were unfounded accusations aimed at damaging the FFS.

[ALGERIE ACTUALITE] Do you suspect that the government was behind that, too?

[Bouhadef] It is possible that the government encouraged such things, but we do not make groundless accusations. We simply state the facts. We were labeled, but no one has the right to lecture us about nationalism, those people least of all.

[ALGERIE ACTUALITE] Some political parties believe that if Islamist parties are allowed to join in the dialogue, it will result once again in dangerous and tragic illusions and impasses. What is your opinion?

[Bouhadef] We have been very clear on the subject of dialogue. We are different from those people in our approach. We have our well-known national contract for democracy. Any person or political party that endorses it is welcome, provided (of course) that they honor their commitments. We will come back to that later.

[ALGERIE ACTUALITE] The FFS believes that a democratic handling of the transition is required in order to eradicate terrorism. Is that truly the best way to combat terrorism?

[Bouhadef] Absolutely! We in the FFS are convinced that a hard-line security policy cannot put an end to terrorism. The proof is that the exclusive focus on security since January has given us what we see today: The terrorism has become more violent than it was. And every time the security forces claim a victory, they admit to the existence of terrorist groups. Terrorism has therefore not been eradicated by the single-minded pursuit of security. For that reason, we believe that, in addition to security-mindedness, dialogue is needed among all those who agree with the principles of the CND [National Contract for Democracy]....

[ALGERIE ACTUALITE] But isn't that what is happening now?

[Bouhadef] This dialogue has yet to take concrete shape; the method that we advocate could very well be an excellent one—a true dialogue between those in power and the representative forces.

[ALGERIE ACTUALITE] Including the former FIS?

[Bouhadef] We do not pose the problem in those terms. We have made very concrete proposals. We advocate dialogue as a way of determining how the period of transition to democracy should be conducted. We recommend a national conference of transition oversight,

divided equally between the government and representative political and social forces. The delegates to this national conference would be the parties that have endorsed the National Contract for Democracy, which consists of six points: the rejection of violence in all its forms and of terrorism; respect for the principle that political power may pass from one political party to another; respect for human rights; guaranteed political and cultural pluralism; respect for the right to differ; and the nonuse of religion and mosques for political ends. This contract is intended not only for political parties, but also for the Algerian people, anyone who would endorse it. The contract will contain a provision for the automatic removal of any party that fails to abide by any one of the six basic principles.

[ALGERIE ACTUALITE] Order, stability, and legitimacy are inseparable, according to the FFS. Does that mean that as long as elections are not held, Algeria will be unstable?

[Bouhadef] Unfortunately, that may be the case. Those three concepts are undeniably linked. But there is a way: If we agree to the scenario that I have just outlined, the problem of legitimacy could be temporarily solved in that the vast majority of Algerians would be represented among the political parties and the representative social forces. Algerians would be therefore be included in the governing of the transition period (the national conference of transition oversight would remain in place only until elections are held). That could be a way of solving the problem of legitimacy.

[ALGERIE ACTUALITE] Another factor that could have a bearing on elections: The head of government expects that it will take at least three years before any light appears at the end of the tunnel. How will that affect new elections, in your view?

[Bouhadef] The FFS does not agree with the three-year approach or with the thinking that is being advanced—that the democratic process cannot be reinstated as long as the authority of the state is not restored. The problem—unchanged since 1962—is legitimacy. The Algerian people have been excluded from the day-to-day running of the country's affairs. The present government does not have a popular mandate. We in the FFS have strong doubts that there will be a breakthrough in three years. The transition must be overseen jointly, and I hasten to add that the FFS is not seeking a part in a power-sharing arrangement at this juncture.

[ALGERIE ACTUALITE] But how can there be a government of national unity without power sharing?

[Bouhadef] We are not in favor of a government of national unity. We are calling for a neutral government, one made up of political but nonpartisan figures approved by the national conference of transition oversight.

[ALGERIE ACTUALITE] Who would the FFS suggest, if asked to name nonpartisan political figures?

[Bouhadef] I could easily fill 40 cabinets with the number of nonpartisan political figures in Algeria. There are legions of them—in the east, west, north, and south.

[ALGERIE ACTUALITE] But can you give us names, Mr. Bouhadef? There is every reason to wonder whether political figures without political convictions actually exist.

[Bouhadef] Absolutely! If you look at the current make-up of governmental departments, the most competent officers have no party affiliation because we have not developed a tradition of "commis d'Etat," which are individuals who hold high-level positions in the civil service despite the fact that they make no secret of their political affiliations. Consequently, many Algerian civil servants do not belong to political parties.

[ALGERIE ACTUALITE] But that does not prevent them from having political leanings or convictions.

[Bouhadef] That is why we use the term "political but nonpartisan."

[ALGERIE ACTUALITE] The only condition you would impose is that these figures not have an official role in a political party.

[Bouhadef] More precisely, they would not belong to a political party or be identified with one. What we are trying to say is that there are legions of highly competent managers who do not belong to political parties and who are capable of managing the transition period, if given the political approval necessary to govern.

[ALGERIE ACTUALITE] Following its meeting with the Higher State Council (HCE), the FFS announced its refusal to modify its principles for a structural arrangement or to safeguard legal activity. Why? What did the HCE propose to the FFS?

[Bouhadef] The memorandum that was made public had been written before—and not after—our meeting with the HCE. So it would be mistaken to see it as a response to some issue raised by the HCE during that meeting. By the way, we provided a copy to the HCE.

[ALGERIE ACTUALITE] Still on the subject of the meeting, what purpose do you see in that dialogue?

[Bouhadef] We have always called for dialogue. When Ghazali became head of government, an FFS delegation headed by our secretary general went to meet with him. We provided him with a memorandum, which contained two points that I would like to mention here: The first asked the head of government at that time to set up a permanent and definitive framework for dialogue; and the second called for armed groups to be identified and disbanded. We have repeatedly called for dialogue, including when Boudiaf came to power, "May God rest his soul." Boudiaf refused to dialogue with us, claiming that we were seeking a power-sharing arrangement and that we should recognize authority....

[ALGERIE ACTUALITE] But Mr. Ait Ahmed did in fact state that he was willing to share power.

[Bouhade] No, we are willing to share power in a legitimate government, but we are not interested in power in the current state of affairs. We recognized the HCE as the de facto authority because the FFS is a party that seeks peace.

[ALGERIE ACTUALITE] There is constant talk about representative forces. In your view, who are these representative forces, which are actually propositional forces in Algeria?

[Bouhade] There are representative forces and propositional forces. Whatever may be said about the balloting on 26 December, we in the FFS agree that it was not a true reflection of reality. But we remain convinced that it is the only valid criterion that can give some idea of the standing of the different political parties. We, ourselves, were the victims of anomalies that took place both before and during the balloting. But we feel that the balloting, as a "full-scale opinion survey," is the most valid measurement, albeit not the sole measurement because there may also be representative forces and individuals with ideas. No one should be excluded from the effort to solve the crisis in Algeria.

[ALGERIE ACTUALITE] But that "full-scale opinion survey" came out in favor of the FIS.

[Bouhade] I see a need to distinguish between what I might call the FIS high command and the 3 million Algerians who cast their ballots for the FIS. We in the FFS do not view those 3 million Algerians as terrorists, nor should they be considered as such. They voted FIS for a number of reasons. Their views, that social reality, must be taken into account....

[ALGERIE ACTUALITE] Yes, but those three million would have been represented by the high command, as you call it.

[Bouhade] We in the FFS cannot answer that question. It should be put to those who legalized the FIS....

[ALGERIE ACTUALITE] Yes, but we were discussing representative forces. The FIS won the vote.

[Bouhade] We in the FFS distinguish between the high command and the three million Algerians who voted FIS. They are the ones who concern us—in other words, they are the ones who should give pause to the Algerian people as a whole. We need to understand why they voted as they did. They should not be ruled out arbitrarily. Now, why was the FIS created and why was it disbanded? The question needs to be put to the proper authorities.

[ALGERIE ACTUALITE] The proper authorities?

[Bouhade] The government! In any case, the FIS could have been disbanded in June 1991, but the government waited until the FIS had acquired a popular mandate

before disbanding it. That is a millstone around the necks of those who decided to legalize the party.

[ALGERIE ACTUALITE] In March 1992, Mr. Ait Ahmed said that he did not expect to win the support of the international press or foreign governments, and yet he spends his time abroad, not even returning to meet with the HCE.

[Bouhade] Mr. Ait Ahmed is viewed with uneasiness because he represents a real alternative. When he is in Algeria, it is rumored that his passport has been revoked, that he was turned back at the airport, etc. When he is abroad, questions are raised. It is also said that the FFS could not exist without Ait Ahmed. I believe that we have proved that the FFS continues to function whether Mr. Ait Ahmed is here or not. That is a secondary problem in our view.

[ALGERIE ACTUALITE] For the leader of a political party, however, he spends a great deal of time abroad.

[Bouhade] We have contacts with foreign political parties and, as you know, we were recently admitted into the Socialist International. We have international activities that are normal for a party such as ours, and Mr. Ait Ahmed is working hard to bring recognition to the FFS as a broad-based, representative party in Algeria. The fact that we were admitted into the Socialist International is compelling proof of the work accomplished by our secretary general. It would be naive to think that there were no obstacles thrown in our way, to block our entry to the Socialist International. I can say no more than that.

[ALGERIE ACTUALITE] The RPN [National Patriotic Assembly] will soon hold a national convention....

[Bouhade] So many people claim to support the RPN. The image that comes to our minds is that of citadel at risk of being captured from above. No one has been able to tell us whether it is a political party or not. Opinions vary widely.

[ALGERIE ACTUALITE] The RPN has a platform.

[Bouhade] That is not very evident. But in our view, if it is a political party, "welcome," we are pro democracy. But let it state its case plainly and comply with the same rules that apply to the other parties. What remains is a question of legitimacy. The people will decide, just as the people decided in Spain and in Portugal where I don't know how many parties were created after the fall of Franco and Salazar....

[ALGERIE ACTUALITE] As the people decided on 26 December?

[Bouhade] Yes! But I believe that, rather than cover our eyes, we should seek to understand the underlying causes of that situation so that we can save Algeria from chaos. The real causes must be addressed if anything useful is to be accomplished. The specter of fear is being exploited and it is the most formidable assassin of ideas. People

are conditioned and made to react in a superficial way. At times, the real causes of stagnation and crisis are forgotten.

I would also like to flesh out the notion of historic reconciliation that was raised by our secretary general in March and incorporated into the FFS declaration in June. Some people have distorted the concept, interpreting it to mean a national reconciliation, while others called it a historic compromise. In our view, it means to reconcile Algerians with their institutions. That may seem trite or vague, but it is actually a profound concept because it is related to the problem of legitimacy. That problem remains. In order to be appointed to a position, you must be a member of the clan, the family, "nepotism," etc. As a result, the Algerian citizen feels alienated from governmental departments, for example. Historic reconciliation means that a rapport should exist between the Algerian citizen and police, the army, the gendarmerie and that he should not need a recommendation in order to have his most basic rights respected. There is a phenomenon of rejection at work right now: Everything emanating from the government is viewed with suspicion. The ideal would be a system like that of Sweden where a mediator or ombudsman defends the citizen against abuse by any governmental agency.

[ALGERIE ACTUALITE] Again and again, you return to the subject of legitimacy, which automatically means that elections must be held. But elections mean democracy and pluralism. Don't you think that it is first and foremost a question of culture and that it will take time?

[Bouhade] There is some truth in what you say, but the countries of the Third World made the mistake of viewing democracy as a future goal rather than a means of solving the problems of development. Development, itself, suffered from that mistake.

[ALGERIE ACTUALITE] It is a vicious circle. The country develops, democracy is instituted, and the result is the creation of political parties like the FIS....

[Bouhade] The strength of the FIS lies in the fact that it has always been in the opposition. It is easier to criticize than it is to accomplish something. What we are trying to say is that development and democracy must be pursued simultaneously. The citizen will not only take interest, but also feel involved because he will take part in some way in the country's development and will more readily agree to the need for austerity measures, which he would never accept if they are imposed on him. Moreover, this would alleviate feelings of frustration and would cause fewer people to turn toward reactionary forces.

Absence of FFS Secretary General Noted

93AF0170B Algiers EL WATAN in French
20 Oct 92 p 32

[Article signed "K.M.": "Ait Ahmed: Complete Silence"]

[Text] So what has become of Mr. Ait Ahmed? The prolonged absence from the political scene of the secretary general of the Front of Socialist Forces [FFS] has given rise to a great deal of speculation, especially since the man in question is one who has gotten us used to stirring up Algerian political life, often with a commotion.

These speculations turn into a mystery in the face of the refusal by party leaders to provide the slightest bit of information on the reasons behind this absence.

Mr. Hocine Ait Ahmed is still abroad but his place of residence seems to be part of the secret that party leaders insist on guarding jealously. "I know neither where he is nor when he is supposed to come back," the party's official in charge of information whom we contacted last Saturday lamented. In all probability, Mr. Ait Ahmed is reported to be in Morocco at the moment.

The absence of the FFS's charismatic head is of several months' duration. The last time he spoke publicly in Algeria was last 3 July, the day after the first speech by Mr. Ali Kafi after he had been installed as chairman of the Higher State Council [HCE].

Ait Ahmed had issued a favorable reaction to this speech, calling Mr. Kafi a "patriot (who) does not close the door to dialogue and historic reconciliation." After that there was complete silence until the period from 15 to 17 September, at which time an FFS communique announced Mr. Ait Ahmed's attendance in Berlin on the occasion of the Socialist International congress.

One month previous, FFS militants meeting in Ouzelaguen to celebrate the anniversary of 20 August 1955 were able to read a letter signed by the head of the FFS but there was no Mr. Ait Ahmed present.

However, there have been at least two major political events that could have justified the presence of the FFS's chief, the 23 July meeting of the party's National Council, and the HCE/FFS meeting at the end of September.

The FFS's total silence regarding Mr. Ait Ahmed's absence opens the door to all sorts of speculations: are there security reasons? is he isolated within the party? is there an open crisis at the center of the party? is this personal convenience?

Division Within FLN Party Reported*93AF0160B Paris LE MONDE in French 3 Nov 92 p 7*

[Article by Algiers correspondent: "Divided as to its Attitude Toward the Government, the FLN (National Liberation Front) Leadership Preserved an Appearance of Unity"]

[Text] Discreetly, the FLN [National Liberation Front] central committee wound up a three-day working session on Friday evening, 30 October, at Batna (eastern Algeria). The committee met behind closed doors, so that nothing much actually leaked out on what was expected to be a stormy meeting between the proponents of a hard line toward the Higher State Council (HCE), the Algerian collegial presidency, and the advocates of a pragmatic rapprochement with the new government (LE MONDE, 29 October). Apparently, this did not happen. Faithful to a line of conduct that had always proved successful when it was the sole party in power and when its internal dissensions were resolved behind the scenes and never at its regular major public events, the FLN, once again was unable, or unwilling, to make a decision.

No spectacular rallying, no sensational resignation from the political bureau, contrary to the rumor that circulated before the meeting. Neither the former prime minister, Mr. Mouloud Hamrouche, nor another "big name," Mr. Abderahmane Belayad, nor of course the general secretary, Mr. Abdelhamid Mehri—a trio who are said to be hostile to the HCE—were defeated by a vote. At a press conference, Mr. Mehri stated that "there were extremely few differences, compared with previous sessions."

This appearance of unity poorly conceals the deep gap between grassroots militants and the FLN leadership, and the serious conflicts that divide the latter, especially on how to solve the Algerian crisis. The central committee merely reiterated its official position in favor of "continued dialogue with the government, so as to reach a national consensus or at least concurrence on the solutions to be adopted."

As Mr. Mehri recalled, the central committee recommended "a global national approach including the Islamists," in defiance of the Algerian authorities' determination to reject any contact with the former FIS [Islamic Salvation Front], the principal leaders of which are now serving prison sentences.

FIS Arms Procurement Network Described*93AF0170A Algiers EL WATAN in French 21 Oct 92 p 4*

[Unattributed article: "Terrorism: The Ex-FIS's Arms Traffic"]

[Text] In one of its latest issues, the Constantine regional daily paper EN NAHAR lifted one corner of the veil on the arms traffic in which the ex-Islamic Salvation Front [FIS] is implicated and that serves it in its terrorist activity.

Thus we learn that this traffic passes through three countries, Egypt, Libya, and Tunisia, and is based on a vast network of intermediaries, among whom are to be found elements of the Tunisian fundamentalist "Al Nahdah" movement led by Rachid Ghanouchi.

In their confessions, Aissa Khelifi and Ali Djeraj, two Algerians who were arrested by the Tunisian police, confirmed the existence of arms trafficking, which began more than a year ago. This was how 32 warning pistols and 4,139 cartridges (7.65- and 6.35-mm), which were to be brought into Algeria were discovered in a cache near Gabes.

EN NAHAR reported on the movements of the two Algerian FIS militants as they procured arms, on their trips to Egypt, Libya, then Tunisia, their "contact" named Abdelkader Aisanni, the head of the "network," who is not to be confused with Othmane Aissani, one of the FIS's founding members. The newspaper provided details on the sums of money spent, which were often large, and on the types of arms purchased. The warning pistols, which were coming into Algeria in quantity, were supposed to be delivered to a certain Khemissi Aidoune, then to Mohamed Aissa, who were in charge of converting them into war arms to be reckoned with.

The operation, EN NAHAR reported, is a very simple one and does not call for highly developed technical means. The arms so "converted" were made available to the FIS's terrorist groups.

One of these arms even blew up in the hands of a certain Z. Ahmed, 22 years of age, who was in charge of a terrorist operation, the Constantine daily newspaper added.

Ahmed is reported to be currently under observation in a Barika hospital in the wilaya of Batna.

Repercussions of Antiterrorist Law Suggested*93AF0160C Algiers EL WATAN in French 18 Oct 92 p 20*

[Commentary by Ahmed Ancer: "Panic"]

[Text] Hunted down, the FIS [Islamic Salvation Front] and its armed groups, in desperation, are turning to murder. The attempts made in recent weeks against civilians and policemen, and those that have occurred in the capital these past few days clearly show it. Two reasons could account for such behavior yielding to panic.

First, the antiterrorist law is beginning to have a few tangible results. It has made it possible to deploy far more considerable means and to pool the efforts of the various security departments. The same approach, with a few minor differences, was adopted everywhere. Arrests, as is known, always lead to new arrests.

The terrorists' second cause for concern probably has to do with the way out offered to those who repent as a corollary to the strongly repressive provisions of the law. By offering such a way out, the government actually threatens the groups' integrity. Any member who defects

presents a dual risk for them, for morale at least, and for security. Although this is the way things are going, we may fear however that terrorism may attempt to refocus its efforts exclusively on large towns, in order to take advantage of the "natural protective cover" offered by the high population concentration. Yesterday, Belcourt came within a hair's breadth of a catastrophe. This being so, it is in towns that the FIS and its groups may lose whatever little support they still have after the bombing of the airport and yesterday's horrible assassination. Confrontations in towns cannot but make innocent victims. And the dead do not forgive.

Antiterrorist Law: Effects 'Significant'

93AF0123E Algiers EL WATAN in French
19 Oct 92 p 1

[Commentary by Khaled Mahrez: "Defensive"]

[Text] Terrorism is not blind. Even if it gives the impression of striking indiscriminately, terrorist operations, by their timing, reflect quite specific, tactical considerations, which themselves are part of the framework of an overall plan to destabilize the country to facilitate the seizure of power.

For the last several weeks the security services involved in the struggle against terrorism have increased the number of search operations directed against the various armed groups. The security forces seem to have taken the offensive in a resolute way, after having counted the casualties and deaths in their own ranks for a long time. The antiterrorist law has opened a breach in the ranks of the armed groups, in which many people who had expressed regret for their actions have been involved. The authorities remain silent concerning the number of people who have surrendered to the security services. However, it can be stated, on the basis of reliable information, that the results achieved are significant. Driven out of the countryside, pursued in the cities, and more and more isolated from the people since the terrible carnage at the airport, the armed groups have been driven onto the defensive. Their reaction in the murderous attacks of 16 and 17 October could have been anticipated.

It is even necessary to expect them to do everything to ensure that they are talked about, through other attacks aimed at "answering" the successes of the security services and maintaining the climate of terror and of suffering. Now that the possibility of a dialogue with the former FIS [Islamic Salvation Front] or a "national reconciliation" seems to be definitely excluded since the revelations of Hocine Abderrahim, the rest of the armed groups could put all of the resources at their disposal in an effort to accelerate the deterioration of the situation and make even more uncertain the prospects of a return to stability, a condition without which no effort to achieve economic recovery would be possible. However, is it not already too late for that?

Success in Curbing 'Terrorism' Said Excellent

93AF0166D Algiers EL WATAN in French
24 Oct 92 pp 1, 3

[Article by M.T. Messaoudi: "A New Phase in the Fight Against Terrorism"]

[Text] Measures enacted by the government to bring terrorism under control have yielded excellent results in a relatively short period of time. Those measures were the formation of special units of the ANP [People's National Army] under the command of General Mohamed Lamari and the enactment of a harsh legislative decree against terrorists and perpetrators of subversive acts.

In the theatre of operations, the fight against terrorism has reached a new degree of intensity with the dismantling of many networks across the country.

In western Algeria, for example, the national gendarmerie has arrested some 100 individuals belonging to terrorist groups in Sougueur, Tlemcen, Sidi Bel-Abbes, and Tiaret, among others. Most of them had ties to other extremist groups in the capital, including explosives suppliers who enabled Hocine Abderrahim's organization to plant a bomb at the airport in Algiers. An extremist named Brahimi, a member of the Tiaret group, which was crushed in the vicinity of El-Bayadh, was recently arrested by the gendarmerie. In eastern Algeria (notably in Constantine, Setif, Batna, and Oum El-Bouaghi), nearly all the terrorist cells have been dismantled by the security forces.

Known terrorists who escaped the combing operations have taken refuge either in urban areas or in remote areas.

A sustained effort was also carried out in central Algeria where the organization known as MIA [Armed Islamic Movement] was concentrated.

In less than 48 hours, the security forces arrested more than 40 individuals for "conspiracy against the authority of the state, attempted assassination, and possession of explosives." The arrests took place primarily in the wilayat of Boumerdes and Ain-Defla.

The terrorists have been the target of nearly relentless efforts by the gendarmerie, the police, and special ANP units to track them down.

Over the weekend, army units made up of paratroops carried out selective operations in certain districts of Algiers, Ben-Aknoun and Bachdjarah among them, where they reinforced barricades manned by the police and gendarmerie.

It seems that the security forces are attempting to prevent terrorists on the run from taking refuge in the capital now that most of their networks have been decimated, particularly in the maquis of the Chelifian Atlas where Gen. Lamari's units are active.

At this stage in the fight against terrorism, the security forces expect the terrorists still at large to react the way a "wounded animal" would—in other words, that they may resort to suicidal acts in desperation.

For some time now, the security forces have been winning numerous victories. It should be noted that they have received a great deal of valuable information from the many individuals who turned themselves in so as to benefit from Article 40 of the decree on subversion and terrorism.

ANP Said Winning War With Terrorists

93AF0182B Algiers LIBERTE in French 22 Oct 92 p 3

[Article by Ghania Khelifi: "Deployment of ANP (People's National Army) Special Units in the Capital: Terrorist Sanctuaries Thoroughly Searched"—first paragraph is LIBERTE introduction]

[Text] Now that ANP (People's National Army) elite units have joined in the war against terrorism, republican Algeria is sure to win.

The antiterrorism system set up by the State is proving day after day its effectiveness in eradicating fundamentalist violence. The dismantling of terrorist networks goes on relentlessly, spreading confusion among the members of these networks who are still free. The bombing of Our Lady of Africa was most revealing of the terrorists' panic, as they strike blindly, even this mother wearing the "hijab."

The entrance of the ANP will ensure the victory of republican Algeria. The elite units created within the ANP to reinforce legal provisions in the war against violence will be the instrument of the rediscovered State.

These elite units were created to operate in an urban environment, the Algiers area; in addition to being highly specialized, they also possess flawless logistics.

Algerian citizens, to the great surprise of foreigners and some pseudodemocrats, are always relieved to hear about the ANP's intervention in operations designed to maintain law and order. They know that the situation is well in hand. The ANP, the only national institution to have lived through the recent upheavals without too much damage, has won if not the support at least the respect of all Algerians.

Whenever a deadlock is reached, as was the case after the first round of the 1991 legislative elections, Algerians almost ask that the ANP should take over. However, as the defender of the Republic and the only bulwark against totalitarian extremists, the army declined the offer—if we can put it that way—and thus confirmed that it was neither the army of a South American dictatorship, nor that of a banana republic.

A strong and credible State, this is one of the things Algerians want most; and an ANP working for civil

peace jointly with other national institutions, this is the very expression of the State's recovered authority.

The army's intervention tolls the death of terrorism. Thus, the joining of the security forces from the various corps, the creation of joint courts consisting of civil and military magistrates, the people's support for antiterrorist measures, all this heartens the Algerians.

For the terrorists, the countdown has now begun. The ANP, being responsible for the country's security, will fulfill its mission to the end: to save Algeria once again.

Capture of Bechar Armed Group Described

93AF0123D Algiers EL WATAN
in French 14 Oct 92 pp 1, 3

[Article: "Bechar Group Caught"; first paragraph is EL WATAN introduction]

[Text] A large-scale operation against terrorism is currently under way in the immediate vicinity of El Bayadh. A large, armed band from Bechar, called, "The Bechar Group," was intercepted by the security services, who took appropriate action to neutralize this feared organization, which is responsible for murderous incidents in certain parts of Oran.

From a reliable source we learned on 13 October that a dozen arrests had taken place and that a substantial number of military weapons were seized. As we write these words, fighting was still going on in the evening, and we learned that the security forces were keeping up constant pressure to prevent any possible escape by the terrorists.

At the moment it is difficult to obtain an exact account of this operation, which involved mobilizing a substantial number of members of the security forces.

Since the beginning of the week the Oran area has seen a major campaign undertaken against the scourge of terrorism. On this subject it will be recalled that two important persons from the Ould Ali Boussaid group were killed on 11 October in the Cheklaoua Sanchidrian quarter of Oran. Aissani Yahia, also known as Brahim, former vice president of the APC [People's Communal Assembly] of the FIS [Islamic Salvation Front] of Oran, who was expelled from the National Gendarmerie about two years ago, was the most influential man in the group. At the time of his arrest he was carrying a Kalashnikov-type automatic weapon. This operation was made possible by the arrest of a member of this group, who identified the hiding place of Aissani and his supporters in a suburban area outside Chteibo. When security agents were sent to the scene, they were informed that the two terrorists were riding a Mobylette [type of motor bike]. Identified by a motorcycle rider who followed them, the two men opened fire but were unable to hit the agent, who alerted his colleagues. Surrounded on all sides, they abandoned the motorbike and tried to find a hiding place in the Sanchidnan quarter, specifically in a

dump containing the remains of wrecked and burned vehicles, where they resisted the authorities.

Members of the National Gendarmerie and of the police then launched a series of assaults, in the course of which Aissani was reportedly shot in the forehead and died on the spot. His companion died while being taken to the hospital in Oran.

After the death of the two members of the Ould-Ali group and the arrest of a third person, an ongoing investigation will determine whether these terrorists were responsible for a number of attacks in Oran, particularly against a police officer in the Victor Hugo section.

About 30 members of this group reportedly have been neutralized. Among them, it was learned, were those involved in the bomb attacks against the newspaper, EL JOUMHOURIA, and the AIR ALGERIE office in Oran.

This band was located for the first time on 27 June and pursued by the National Gendarmerie in M'Sila Forest. It went into hiding. The gang included three persons of Moroccan nationality who were arrested later on at Kouchet El-Dijer (in the Oran area), where they had hidden plastic explosives in Les Arenes Mosque.

Still according to the same source, a number of young women were reportedly recruited by this band and were to be used to provide intelligence. They were eventually to be employed in setting bombs.

Belaid Criticized for Vague Economic Policy*93AF0171A Algiers EL WATAN in French 7 Nov 92 p 5*

[Article from APS: "Belaid Abdesselam: Uncommunicative, According to London Circles"]

[Text] If they gave Mr. Belaid Abdesselam's statements on productive investments and partnerships with foreign companies a warm welcome, London's oil and financial circles nevertheless are sorry about a glaring communications gap when it comes to "the economy's new direction."

Financial and oil experts in London, when questioned by an APS correspondent, were unanimous on one fundamental point: "The public relations side, which is the main method used to acquaint financial backers and foreign companies with the prime minister's strategy, remains a very weak one."

Jonathan Stern, an independent researcher and consultant who specializes in gas issues and was the head of the energy and environment program at London's Royal Institute of International Affairs from 1985 to April 1992, currently a consultant to the Gas Strategies Company, and the author of several works on gas, came right out and said: "The new team is not very active."

"The oil companies know Nordine Ait Laoussine very well; they know his strategy and, through him, Algeria's strategy. He is a specialist who used to give many interviews and talks," he noted.

"That is precisely what is lacking today," he emphasized, adding that "the new team must come up with more detailed clarifications and statements about its program."

"Algeria has a very important role to play in the gas field. It is a country that is certain to become a top exporter for the countries of Europe," he stated.

"Furthermore," he observed, "the National Company for the Transport and Marketing of Hydrocarbons [SONATRACH] has the advantage of being a strong and stable company, and it will remain so for a long time yet to come, unlike the companies of certain Western [oil]-producing countries, which are subject to the laws of a fierce competition and threatened by the emergence and access of a multitude of small companies on the European gas market, something which makes them less credible with regard to security of supply," he said. For Stern, "Algeria offers every security guarantee, which must be backed up by consistent media support on the part of the Algerian authorities."

For their part, Professors Smedley and Mick Black, of the magazine PETROLEUM ARGUS, believe that "the general impression in oil circles, given the small amount of information, is that Algeria should be approached cautiously."

For his part, Jon Marks, the chief editor of the North Africa department of the magazine MIDDLE EAST ECONOMIC DIGEST and a specialist on Algeria, notes that in financial circles, "people interested in Algeria complain of having gotten the same information that was published by Algerian newspapers, that is, the general outlines of the government's program."

"What they're interested in are details of the strategy regarding the foreign debt and clarifications on the issue of foreign investment conditions, these being extremely important items, which have thus far been sadly lacking," he said.

Jon Marks emphasized one point that he termed "crucial": "An agreement or, if you will, some kind of 'understanding' between the two parties is vital if the gates are to be opened up for foreign financing. That would be the green light for Algeria's financial backers," he pointed out.

"The other very important thing is the changes that have been announced in Algeria's commercial and financial legislation and that the international financial community is still waiting for," he added.

Francesca Carnevale, the director of the magazine TRADE FINANCE, which has already published two special editions on Algeria and is preparing to publish a third, noted that for the international financial community, it is a matter of "wait and see."

"Algeria," she said, "is on the market with, in particular, different agreements to upgrade natural liquefied gas plants, which it has signed with the Japanese and the Americans."

"That is one positive aspect," she noted, "but other agreements are bogged down, given the reticence of foreign partners, who are not yet very reassured by a program they know very little about."

And it is at this level, according to her, that the negative aspect comes into play.

"Those who want to invest in Algeria complain that there is no one in the government to give a clear explanation of what it is the government anticipates doing," Carnevale said.

"Most countries in the gas field which, like Algeria, manage to garner major contracts, immediately plunge into new projects and move into a higher level," she explained.

"However," she noted, "Algeria seems to be focusing its efforts exclusively in the areas of oil and gas, whereas the investment possibilities in other sectors are also very good."

Tourism Said Up Due to New Security Measures

93AF0122E Algiers EL WATAN in French
18 Oct 92 pp 1, 32

[Article by Amel Boumediene: "Tourism Beginning Again in the South!"; first paragraph is EL WATAN introduction]

[Text] Tourist activity in the southern part of Algeria and particularly in the Tamanrasset area, seems to be resuming in a very encouraging way.

In effect, since the implementation of exceptional security measures decided on by the government to put an end to acts of banditry and highway robbery, Tamanrasset is breathing again and little by little is resuming its usual calm.

This tendency toward a normalization of the situation is reflected in a noticeable resumption of tourism, marked in particular by the presence of tourists travelling in groups.

Optimism is in style in tourist and travel agencies in Tamanrasset, which reflects this substantial resumption of activity. Italians, Swiss, French, and Germans are now touring the southern part of the country. They represent the first signs of a resumption of tourism which promises to be particularly productive.

At the Hotel Tahat, where tourists come who wish to visit the Assekrem area, consideration has even been given to reducing the room charges to fill the hotel.

It was learned from sources in the province of Tamanrasset that after two years of difficulty tourist activity in the Hoggar area has recorded a noticeable improvement in these early months of the season.

It was after incidents of highway robbery and bandit activity in the Tamanrasset area that the number of tourists declined. Tourism is a considerable source of income for the economic growth of the region.

To try to normalize the situation, the local authorities adopted drastic security measures that were rapidly implemented, not only in the border areas but also in the places most visited by tourists to guarantee foreigners a peaceful visit.

For example, an ad hoc security committee, presided over by Sahraoui Rezgui, governor of the province of Tamanrasset, made security arrangements whose objective is to eradicate all acts of banditry and highway robbery in the region. We were told: "These actions gave those responsible for the tourist sector in Tamanrasset a new feeling of confidence. That has been shown by the resumption of tourist and handicraft activity."

According to a poll made of more than 15 tourist and travel agencies, out of the 35 operating in the province of Tamanrasset, more than 500 tourists of different nationalities, traveling in groups of 35 persons, are expected to make trips through the Tassili and Hoggar areas.

Furthermore, other groups of Italian, Swiss, French, and German tourists are already visiting these areas. Recently the management of Hotel Tahat had confirmation from foreign tourist agencies of the arrival of about 1,000 guests during the month of December. As a result, Mohamed Hadj Cherif, director general of the General Tourist Enterprise of Tamanrasset, decided to lower the prices charged at Hotel Tahat. He said that, "Tourism is something for everyone, and it is essential for security to return to Tamanrasset to allow tourist activity to regain its place in the national economy."

The Hoggar area, described as a "Universal museum open to the sky," will be able to display its beauty to visitors without any restraints. Its area, estimated at more than 400,000 square km, contains a wide variety of panoramic views of exceptional beauty.

The Hoggar area also has superb vistas that look like the moon, innumerable archeological and historic ruins such as the tomb of Tin-Hinan in Abaliesa, as well as cave drawings in the Atakor area, near Assekrem. Furthermore, a variety of natural sites are again being visited in the Ahaggar area, such as oases and mineral springs that make visitors marvel.

Economic Malaise Blamed on Past, Present Policy

93AF0160A Paris LE MONDE in French
5 Nov 92 pp 20-21

[Article by special correspondent in Algiers, Jean-Pierre Tuquoi: "Algeria: The Temptation of Interventionism"—first paragraph is LE MONDE introduction]

[Text] Mr. Belaid Abdesslam's government has put off the restructuring of state-owned companies and indefinitely postponed privatization. The State is making a strong comeback.

"Yes, we have received sabotage threats. We have taken measures to meet these threats. Security was boosted and access to facilities restricted. There are more police in the industrial zone." The top official of SONATRACH [National Company for the Transport and Marketing of Hydrocarbons], the Algerian national oil company, wants to say it once and for all. "In Arzew," he goes on, "iron discipline must prevail. People don't have to think, just do as they are told."

In this small town on the Algerian coast midway between Oran and Mostaganem, which the arrival of Saharan gas has turned into a gigantic industrial zone, the time has therefore come to mobilize. To mobilize against Islamist "terrorists" and their sabotage threats. To mobilize also in order to win "the battle of liquefied natural gas." The wager is to overhaul natural gas liquefaction facilities, as this form of energy is destined to become Algeria's main source of foreign currency and—starting in 1996—to provide the country with the precious foreign currency that will revive the economy.

A brighter future is a better future. Meanwhile, Algeria keeps getting bogged down in the crisis. Computed in dollars, the gross domestic per capita output fell by practically one-half in five years. Deregulated, except for a few exceptions (flour, semolina, milk), prices are shooting up. A kitchen range made in Algeria costs 10 months of the minimum wages, and a locally made pair of shoes almost a full week. Meat has become a luxury. "The price of drugs has increased tenfold in three years," an Algerian cancer specialist, Mr. Tawfiq Henni, asserted. The same goes for bagged cement, a rare commodity in a country plagued by a severe housing shortage. The job situation is hardly any better. According to official statistics, unemployment affects over one-fifth of the active population, most of them young people. Industrial investment has come to a halt, and the public deficit is getting bigger. The 1992 budget was expected to show a surplus, as had been the case the previous year. Actually, the country is heading toward an abysmal deficit, probably close to 10 percent of the gross national product.

The poor state of the Algerian economy is nothing new. But should it be blamed on the "lax management" of the eighties, the "black decade" daily denounced by a press that is again toeing the line? Or, more radically, should it be viewed as the poisoned fruits of the disastrous decision made during the sixties, just after independence, to endow Algeria with a socialist-type economy? The debate is not at all about theory.

The 'Black Decade'

Convinced that the roots of the problem were ancient, the team of technocrats gathered between 1989 and 1991 around the prime minister, Mr. Mouloud Hamrouche, chose the liberal way. Privatization of agriculture, price decontrolling, orthodox management of public finances, with a central bank provided with a German-type statute, elimination of foreign-trade monopolies, independence of public companies, etc. Changes were made fast and often haphazardly. "We had to disentangle the State from the economy as soon as possible, and to make the change irreversible," a minister of the former government protested. Promised for 1992, convertibility of the dinar, the national currency, was to be the final touch.

Actually, all this has stopped, and reforms are at a standstill. Mr. Hamrouche's departure, and his replacement by Mr. Sid Ahmed Ghazali on a backdrop of political crisis, have caused the machine to grind to a halt. Can it start again? And in what direction? The answer is in the hands of the new prime minister, Mr. Belaid Abdesslam. The man is not a newcomer. A close associate of President Boumediene, this 64-year-old intellectual, short and well-padded, was the leading advocate of the famous theory of "the industrializing industry," a theory that he applied with conviction during his 12 years at the head of the Ministry of Industry and Energy. As a result, as it nears the end of

the century, Algeria finds that it has sacrificed its agriculture and paid a high price to equip itself with a heavy industry of proverbial inefficiency. "A man of the past, Mr. Abdesslam was the last person to whom the country's recovery should have been entrusted. For he is the one who plunged the country's economy into the abyss. He is the man responsible for the 30—not 10—black years that Algeria has known," Mr. Nourredine Boukrouh, chairman of the Algerian Renewal Party (PRA), a liberal formation, charged.

This judgment, which is also that of many Algerians, is severe. Too severe, because it ignores the fact that this uncompromising nationalist and proponent of a strong interventionist State is too clever a politician and too intelligent a man not to have changed. "Since his dismissal from the government in 1978, Mr. Abdesslam has changed. He is a pragmatist. He has drawn the lessons from the collapse of East European countries," one of his close associates, the minister of energy, Mr. Hacem Mefti, also assured. Witness the decision made public late in September, which would have seemed sacrilegious to the Belaid Abdesslam of the "Boumediene years": the appointment to a minister's post of Mr. Redha Amiani, the young "boss of Algerian bosses," who belongs to the most liberal wing of their organization, the Algerian Employers Confederation (CAP).

Looking for a Third Way

This does not mean that Mr. Abdesslam who, by the end of the sixties, was implementing an economic policy that exactly copied the socialist model, has converted to capitalism. More simply, after the Hamrouche government's "Polish-type" liberal experiment, Abdesslam seems to be looking for a third way to make his comeback, a way between liberalism and interventionism, on a backdrop of national independence. On the one hand, price decontrolling is not thrown back into question, nor is the opening of Algerian mineral resources to international oil companies. On the other hand, there is an undeniable return to some sort of interventionism. The National Bank of Algeria, guilty of independence, is again well under control and its governor, Mr. Hadj Nacer "resigned"; there is increased interventionism in foreign trade: the State is making a strong comeback.

Witness also the fact that Mr. Abdesslam ordered reluctant banks to rescue some 400 state-owned companies. In debt beyond all measure, suffering from a chronic shortage of spare parts as much as from overstaffing, many of these companies are already in an advanced state of coma. Hence inconceivable situations: in some companies, sales do not cover the payroll. In the construction sector, the situation at least is clear: tens of thousands of workers have not been paid for months.

Already confronted with this situation, the Algiers Government one year ago was talking about "restructuring" state-owned companies (they provide 700,000 jobs, twice as many as the private sector), then to privatize

some of them. No one mentions it any more. Restructuring has been put off to better days, and privatization (which, according to Mr. Abdesslam, would only benefit "vultures") has been postponed indefinitely. The prime minister chose to provide one last oxygen bottle: 90 billion dinars as a final settlement. Although much less than what had been asked (400 billion), this amount is not insignificant. It represents one-fourth of the State budget. "It will achieve nothing and settle nothing," according to the former minister of labor, Mr. Abdelaziz Ziari. "It would have been far better to have the courage to restructure the sector and allocate the money saved to the creation of an unemployment insurance fund."

The way the operation is financed was also criticized. "The State's coffers are empty. We will have to print money. Eventually, workers will be paid in worthless currency. The dinar is doomed to tumble, and inflation will explode," the PRA chairman claimed, while a former senior executive predicted imminent "three-digit inflation." A catastrophic scenario, which is the extreme opposite of the rosy one sketched by Mr. Abdesslam. While his opponents talk about a tumble of the dinar (from 2 francs [Fr] in 1985, it has now dropped to Fr0.25), the prime minister, in his government program, talks about "starting to revalue the dinar to some extent."

'Social Safety Net'

Wishful thinking? For the time being, it is the devaluation of the dinar that is on the agenda for Algeria and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), with the prospect of a rescheduling of the Algerian debt. It is estimated at \$26 billion (not including an estimated \$4 billion owed to Russia), and its repayment will "pump" \$9 billion this year (compare this figure with the \$12 billion to be derived from oil and gas exports), and \$9.5 billion next year. "The hump in the Algerian debt curve was supposed to start going down in 1990. Actually, it is just shifting. The hump has turned into a rolling pin," a banker observed.

Algiers has gone over its accounts over and over again: to make ends meet in a country that spends nearly \$2 billion on foodstuff imports and \$400 million on drugs, \$1 billion has to be found. Solutions to the problem exist; they are few and all are painful. Obtaining new loans would require an agreement with the IMF (with another devaluation of the dinar). Negotiating a "reprofiling" of the public debt with the Paris Club, an organization that regroups creditor countries: The Algerians do not want to. "We refuse to be raped in public," an official of the Bank of Algeria protested. The ideal solution, according to the Algerian Government, would be for France to agree to renegotiate the Algerian debt guaranteed by COFACE [French Foreign Trade Insurance Company] (the public body that insures export risks). Some Fr15 billion are involved. But, because France is also in charge of the Paris Club secretariat, the French Government does not want to "give a bad example" and declines to do something that Italy, for its part, has agreed to.

Pending a problematic easing of the situation—the Algerians count on Mr. Roland Dumas' forthcoming visit or, if that fails, on a change of majority in France—the government invited the Algerian people to tighten their belts. One more notch. Health care, housing, oil and gas, and food were declared priorities. In these sectors, imports will be made easier. The other economic sectors will have to make do with what they have. The proof that this policy is beginning to be implemented is that imports from France, Algeria's leading trade partner, declined by more than 14 percent during the first quarter of 1992. "Austerity should not last more than three years," Mr. Abdesslam promised. To get over the worst, the creation of a "social safety net" is under consideration. Among other things, it will provide for the payment of a monthly indemnity of 120 dinars to people with no other resources—there are millions of them. This is the price of one pack of American cigarettes on the Algiers sidewalks.

Report on Family Planning Center, Demographics
93WE0102Z Algiers ALGER REPUBLICAIN in French
 27 Oct 92 p 5

[Article by Mustapha Ghobrini: "A Pilot Center for Family Planning Services"]

[Text] The opening ceremony of a pilot center for family planning services took place on 14 October 1992 at the polyclinic of the Mostaganem plateau. Among those attending were the governor of Mostaganem, the chief administrator, the medical and paramedical corps, and the president of the Algerian Family Planning Association (APF).

APF's president, Dr. Khelladj Bouchenak, opened the proceedings with a statement of the goals and purpose of the center: to encourage the spacing of births by providing quality services (contraceptives, information, etc.) to couples within a framework of medical guidance.

Dr. Bouchenak noted that Mostaganem had been chosen because it encompasses urban, semi-urban, and rural areas (lower educational levels and a high illiteracy rate among women).

The governor began a long speech by noting, "This is an excellent initiative, particularly in view of the large sums of money spent on family planning and the rate of population growth."

The governor drew attention to the problems of overstaffing and the under use of equipment at health centers, concluding with the assurance that he is ready to

open the doors of health centers to the APF and other associations in order to make family planning service more available.

During the discussion period, Professor Adjali reminded those present that the first attempt to introduce birth spacing techniques was launched in Mostaganem with the help of Cuban doctors who "secretly" made interuterine devices using fishing line.

The pilot center in Mostaganem is part of an ongoing project sponsored by the European Economic Community (EEC) and initiated by the International Family Planning Federation of which the APF is a member. The project includes the center in Oran, which opened on 19 September 1992 at the Jean Kraft Clinic and another in Constantine.

The EEC has entrusted the execution of the project to the International Federation, which has received 1,280,000 ECUs [European currency unit] from the EEC for that purpose. Project funding covers the provision of contraceptives, the Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) program, personnel training, and documentation.

The National School of Public Health in Algiers is taking part in the training of medical and paramedical personnel. The pilot center is overseen by a coordinating group made up of the APF and health district officials whose role is to monitor and evaluate the center's activities.

The work of the coordinating group is governed by an 11-point agreement signed by the two parties.

The center's mission is to provide the public with information and education, quality services, personnel training, specialized documentation, and IEC activities.

Demographic Data for 1988-1991

Category	1988	1989	1990	1991
Est. population	537,136	551,212	569,866	585,469
Women of child-bearing age	64,994	66,697	67,546	71,592
Births	19,186	17,272	16,868	16,721
Birthrate (%)	35.70	31.69	29.60	28.56
Infant deaths	1,394	1,068	999	932
Infant mortality rate (%)	72.65	62.17	59.24	55.73
Deaths	3,313	7,950		
Crude death rate (%)	6.34	5.35	5.02	4.76
Natural increase (%)	2.77	2.24	2.07	1.91

In this four-year period, births decreased by 2,465; the infant mortality rate fell 18 points from 73% to 55%. The rate of natural increase fell by 0.86%.

Source: DDS [expansion not given], Mostaganem

Membership, Training at Imam Institute

93AF0182A Paris LE MONDE in French
18 Nov 92 p 12

[Article by special correspondent in Saint-Leger-de-Fougeret (Nievre), Philippe Bernard: "Call of the Muezzin on the Morvan"]

[Text] The call of the muezzin echoes over the rolling hills of the Morvan. It is the signal for the second prayer at the Bouteloin estate, 11 hectares nested among fir trees. Long used by the Schlumberger Company to house its holiday camps, this set of disparate buildings scattered around the manor house was purchased by the Union of Islamic Organizations in France (UOIF). This is where the first imam training institute in Europe has been in the making for now one year (LE MONDE dated 20 December 1991).

From a failed inauguration to an aborted start of the new term, the Higher Islamic Institute, discreetly named "European Human Sciences Institute" is meeting with the government's reluctance to promote the installation of the Islamic fundamentalism European headquarters 6 km from Chateau-Chinon, a town of which Francois Mitterrand was mayor for many years.

Yet, the UOIF had gambled on the ambiguities of French policy where Islam is concerned. The federation, which regroups over 100 Muslim associations, had announced its determination to train imams in France. It thus answered the concerns raised by the presence in most French mosques of non-French-speaking imams from the Maghreb, who are hard to control and suspected of maintaining French Muslims in a state of dependence on foreign countries.

The participation of personalities close to Maghreb Islamists aggravated the controversy one year ago, postponing the start of the term. The enrollment of students coming mostly from East European countries prompted the Ministry of Interior to take a tougher line, and to decide to freeze all visa applications from Bulgarians, Albanians, Yugoslavs, and other East Europeans. As a result, of 50 applicants, only 13 students, 10 of whom lived in France, were able to follow the first year of a four-year curriculum, which includes courses in "Islamic sciences," "European civilization," Arabic, and French, after paying tuition fees of 30,000 francs [Fr].

'Arabic, Our Language'

Now in its second year, the institute is still closely watched by the State. The scenario, therefore, was the same as last year. Of some 100 applicants, 50 were selected, but one-half of them, coming from East European countries, were denied permission to come to France. The umpteenth official inauguration, on 10 October, to which the president of the Republic had even been invited, did not attract as much notice as its

promoters had expected. Invited personalities from Gulf countries were denied French visas, while French officials ignored the ceremony.

Mr. Ahmed Jaballah, the Tunisian Islamic theology professor in charge of studies, blames the government's hypocrisy: "No one will tell us what is the problem with us, but they put all spokes in our wheels." The position of the Institute directors makes an effort to be presentable: "We are not asking for application of the shari'ah in France because we are aware that we are a minority community. We wish for an Islam that would take French realities into account. There is no incompatibility between genuine Islam and France," Mr. Jaballah indicated, nevertheless conceding that "we have a problem in France, the separation of church and state."

Until the Bouteloin center is made profitable by a genuine Islamic university—which is improbable—the estate has been used these past three summers for UOIF holiday camps. This year, some 500 people came to this site, which is highly symbolic of the association's determination to revive Islam.

Two prayer rooms, one for the girls, the other for the boys, were fitted out next to the dormitories. All it took was rugs spread on the tile floors. On the walls, ritual formulas written in Arabic were phonetically "translated" into Roman letters: most holiday camp boarders are Beurs [French citizens born in France of Arab immigrant parents] and cannot read the language of the Koran. "We want to help these young people integrate, not turn them into fundamentalists," Mr. Jean-Francois Bruneaud, the young Frenchman converted to Islam who heads the holiday center, insisted.

The schedule provides for waking up at 0600 for the first prayer, ablutions, school tutoring or Islamic culture during the morning, picnic, kite workshop of lecture on Islam, campfire. This year, Abdel, 11, did not go to Algeria for the summer holidays, "because there is a war going on." He likes the Saint-Leger camp where "we don't do like the French do, because we are different. At the French school," he explained, "the girls go to the swimming pool with the boys. Here, we each have our showers and we wear shorts." Oussane, another young boarder, understood quite well the lesson on "difference": "Some French people hate other French people," he stated. "We, in Islam, are all brothers."

In the adolescents' class, boys sit in the front rows, while girls sit together in the back rows. They all wear headscarves, "not out of submissiveness, but for our honor's sake," a Moroccan high-school girl indicated. At Saint-Leger, Saida is learning Arabic, "our language." She left the holiday camp with "a desire to work well at school" and one conviction: from now on, she will keep her headscarf on at the lycee. "It used to be, I did not know anything; I was about to forget my origins." Her face framed in a night-blue scarf, she repeats: "Here, we learn to integrate."

Number of Youth Emigrating Increasing*93AF0170D Algiers EL WATAN
in French 21 Oct 92 p 17*

[Article by A. Hayane: "Escapes Abroad: an Uninterrupted Flow"; first paragraph is EL WATAN introduction]

[Text] *The number of young Algerians who go into exile, or try to do so, in foreign countries, those of Europe in particular, is continually on the rise.*

Faced with a very difficult social life, unemployment, tight housing, and exclusion from school, a young person only sees his salvation in expatriation to what he views as his life's "Garden of Eden," that place where he will be able to survive and aspire to happiness. Nothing can shake this feeling within him that on the other side of the sea everything is open and accessible to him. Neither the racism nor the difficulties of integrating nor the language spoken [there] nor the marginalization nor (especially) the unemployment, which is an economic fact of life but also a political fact of life in greater evidence in the West can make him back down from his ideal.

Rejected by the society in which he was born and grew up and unable to assume responsibilities for which his age nevertheless predestines him, the young Algerian cares not a whit for the government's empty and monotonous political speeches.

Nothing specific, nothing material, in a word nothing "palpable" is being offered to him. Everything he is being "stuffed" with is made up of demagoguery and fine words. But the worst thing is the fact that 30 years of waste and carelessness and dictatorship and repression have given young Algerians no hope in the future of their country.

No hope, that quality which, to the exclusion of all others, allows a man to see his life in the expectation that well-being will always be possible. Furthermore, politics and social issues being intertwined, since the 1988 "democratic" opening, the young Algerian has been experiencing the vicissitudes of an explosive domestic situation.

To Eldorado

Death, destruction, and misfortune have rained down on his country, giving him solace and pushing him yet further in his wish to go far and "avoid" this "trap" in which he is evolving despite himself.

So flight abroad becomes a vital necessity for him: no matter what his age, from the moment he understands things, every Algerian makes up his mind. Parents, for their part, after having long thought of their children's departure as a blot on the family, in recent years have become more conciliatory and today find it easier to accept this state of affairs and sometimes even encourage it. They do so with the obvious goal not of ridding themselves of one "mouth to feed" (which is rarely the case!) but so as to allow their children to aspire to a life

that is better than their own. In search of material conditions that will favor his departure, the young person does not stint on the means and nothing stands in his way; he is prepared to go into debt or get mixed up in "shady" deals involving false papers and even at times, and this is more serious, in drug trafficking. He is also prepared to lay siege day and night to Algiers' Western embassies to obtain a hypothetical visa, which is his passport to a very different sort of hypothetical "happiness." So escape abroad becomes a genuine "national sport" open to all "young people between the ages of seven and 77." Even more than soccer or school, exile mobilizes extraordinary energies.

The spirit of initiative, of do-it-yourself, of "resourcefulness," and of counting on oneself appear as if by magic and turn young people who are full of derring-do into "Indiana Joneses" who go off to attack the bureaucratic "jungle," the national as well as the consular variety. Those who manage to leave, and there are more of them despite the ever increasing number of candidates, will have gained much consideration and respect.

They are the ones who will have won the "big prize," the fortunate ones, the ones who lead a charmed life, the lucky ones. Their qualities and their capitalized experiences will be commented upon and analyzed and will allow others who have remained standing against the walls in densely populated neighborhoods but cannot wait to leave to take advantage of this experience and try again and again. Maybe that too is hope. It is, however, a hope built on false values.

Citizens React to Establishment of FSS Fund*93AF0166A Algiers EL WATAN in French
23-24 Oct 92 p 3*

[Article by Ferid Racim Chikhi: "Salaried Workers Disturbed by Tax Initiative"]

[Text] It appears that before financial adjustment and balancing mechanisms are enacted to combat tax fraud and evasion, a special solidarity fund (FSS) is to be created. The FSS is strangely reminiscent of the infamous high-salary initiative. Out of what appears to be a lack of imagination, officials at the ministry of the economy have proposed yet another withholding tax on fixed income affecting the salaries of workers and, more particularly, midlevel managers.

It is true that the national solidarity contribution, although limited and temporary, is discriminatory in that it penalizes salaried employees whose earnings are reported and known and therefore easy to tax.

"What is certain," we were told by a midlevel manager at SNTF [National Railway Transport Company], "is that the 1993 finance law is part of a battery of instruments that will be used to achieve the goals set forth in the government's program. However, once again we find ourselves expecting to hear that the solidarity tax will be withheld solely from salaried income. It seems to us that